82 1608/139

MEMOIRS

FOR THE

HISTORY

OF

Madame de MAINTENON

AND OF THE

LAST AGE.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH,

By the AUTHOR of

THE FEMALE QUIXOTE.

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Bonam facile crederes, magnam libenter. TAC.

DUBLIN:

Printed for A. and H. BRADLEY, P. WILSON, J. EXSHAW, and S. COTTER, Bookſellers.

M,DCC,LVIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM
15 NOV 67

To the Right Honourable

THE COUNTESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

MADAM,

THE lady whoſe hiſtory I take the liberty to offer you, was a ſtriking example of the power of fortune, when, for a long ſeries of years, that power was exerted in her favour, till it raiſed her at laſt to a throne. This happy influence of her ſtars extends to her memory and name; and in no ſingle inſtance is it more to be envied, than that to this tranſlation of her memoirs, is prefixed the illuſtrious name of the COUNTESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

An exalted underſtanding, ſuperiority of genius, univerſal benevolence, and unfeigned piety; ſuch were the qualities by which madame de Maintenon was diſtinguiſhed: ſuch are the qualities, which, in you, madam, adorn the moſt eminent rank,

add luſtre to the nobleſt line of anceſtors, and give dignity to wealth. To whom, therefore, can I, with ſo great propriety, dedicate theſe memoirs as to your ladyſhip?

You have, madam, expreſly forbid me to praiſe you; why was I not enjoined to forbear flattery only? I might then have expatiated freely on a character, where the higheſt panegyrick would have been but an offering to truth: but although you have ſuppreſſed praiſe, madam, permit gratitude to declare, that the protection you have been pleaſed to afford this work, will be always conſidered as an honour by her, who is, with all imaginable reſpect,

MADAM,

Your Ladyſhip's

Moſt obliged and moſt

Obedient Servant,

CHARLOTTE LENNOX.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE *family of* d'Aubigné. Page 1

CHAPTER II.

John d'Aubigné. 4

CHAPTER III.

Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné. 5

CHAPTER IV.

D'Aubigné *in the ſervice of the king of* Navarre. 9

CHAPTER V.

Flight of the king of Navarre. 11

CHAPTER VI.

D'Aubigné *in diſgrace.* 14

CHAPTER VII.

D'Aubigné *recalled to court. His marriage.* 16

CHAPTER VIII.

D'Aubigné's *advice to the K. of* Navarre. 20

CHAPTER IX.

D'Aubigné *retires.* 28

CHAPTER X.

The ſchemes of d'Aubigné. 34

CHAPTER XI.

Of the rebellion of d'Aubigné. *His dumb man, and the ſale of* Maillezais. 38

CHAPTER XII.

Of the univerſal Hiſtory of d'Aubigné. 44

CHAPTER XIII.

Conſtans d'Aubigné. 47

CHAPTER XIV.

D'Aubigné *makes his eſcape to* Geneva. 50

CHAP-

CHAPTER XV.
The treachery of Conſtans d'Aubigné. Page 53
CHAPTER XVI.
The marriage of Conſtans d'Aubigné. 55
CHAPTER XVII.
The death of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné. 57
CHAPTER XVIII.
The impriſonment of Conſtans d'Aubigné. 59
CHAPTER XIX.
Of Francis d'Aubigné. 61
CHAPTER XX.
The education of Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné. 66
CHAPTER XXI.
Death of madame d'Aubigné 70
CHAPTER XXII.
The fair American. 75
CHAPTER XXIII.
The abbé Scaron. 78
CHAPTER XXIV.
Marriage of mademoiſelle d'Aubigné. 83
CHAPTER XXV.
The ſociety of madame Scaron. 88
CHAPTER XXVI.
The firſt views of madame Scaron. 91
CHAPTER XXVII.
Of mademoiſelle Scaron, *and mademoiſelle de* Palaiſeau. 93
CHAPTER XXVIII.
The poverty of madame Scaron. 96
CHAPTER XXIX.
The lovers of madame Scaron. 99
CHAPTER XXX.
The opinion which the cotemporaries of madame Scaron *had of her virtue.* 102
CHAPTER XXXI.
The death of Scaron. 111
CHAPTER XXXII.
The poverty of madame Scaron. *Her conduct.* 113

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXXIII.
Of the ſuperintendant Fouquet. Page 118
CHAPTER XXXIV.
Of Villarçeaux. 122
CHAPTER XXXV.
Madame Scaron *obtains a penſion from the queen-mother.* 124
CHAPTER XXXVI.
Madame Scaron *refuſes a huſband, and loſes her penſion.* 132
CHAPTER XXXVII.
The firſt amours of Lewis XIV. 135
CHAPTER XXXVIII.
Of Cardinal Mazarine's *nieces.* 137
CHAPTER XXXIX.
Of madame de la Valliere. 143
CHAPTER XLI.
Of madame de Monteſpan. 165
CHAPTER XLII.
Madame Scaron *obtains a penſion from the king.* 175
CHAPTER XLIII.
Madame Scaron *becomes a devoteé* 180
CHAPTER XLIV.
Madam Scaron *is made governeſs to the king's children.* 186
CHAPTER XLV.
Madame Scaron *at court.* 193
CHAPTER XLVI.
Madame de Richelieu *made lady of honour to the queen.* 195
CHAPTER XLVII.
Of the Count de Lauzun, *and the princeſs* de Montpenſier. 198
CHAPTER XLVIII.
The diſorders of the court. 206
CHAPTER XLIX.
The diſgrace and return of madame de Monteſpan. 208
CHAPTER L.
Madame Scaron's *journey to* Antwerp. 212

CHAP-

CHAPTER LI.

The dutcheſs de la Valliere *turns carmelite.* Page 221

CHAPTER LII.

The purchaſe of Maintenon. 227

CHAPTER LIII.

The retreat of madame de Monteſpan. 231

CHAPTER LIV.

The commencement of the king's affection for madame de Maintenon. 242

CHAPTER LV.

Cabals of the devotees, the murmurs of the courtiers. 248

CHAPTER LVI.

A marriage propoſed to madame de Maintenon. 255

CHAPTER LVII.

Madame de Monteſpan *returns to court.* 257

CHAPTER LVIII.

Madame de Maintenon's *journey to* Barege. 261

CHAPTER LIX.

Madame de Maintenon *remains at court.* 264

CHAPTER LX.

The year 1675. 269

CHAPTER LXI.

The year 1677. 277

CHAPTER LXII.

Of Charles d'Aubigné. 283

CHAPTER LXIII.

Madame de Maintenon's *converſation with the king.* 289

CHAPTER LXIV.

The imprudence and fall of madame de Monteſpan. 293

CHAPTER LXV.

Madame de Maintenon *is made dame d'Autour to the dauphineſs.* 294

CHAPTER LXVI.

The chambre-ardente, or burning-court. 300

THE

THE PREFACE.

MAdame de Maintenon had been often ſolicited by mademoiſelle d'Aumale to write her own memoirs, which ſhe conſtantly refuſed. 'I will not write 'my life,' ſaid ſhe, 'becauſe I muſt not ſay all; and 'what I might ſay, will not be believed.'

Thus, by an exceſs of prudence and modeſty, we are deprived of the hiſtory of a lady, who, although neither a miſtreſs nor a queen, enjoyed, during thirty years, more influence and power, than it is common for queens or even miſtreſſes to poſſeſs.

If ſhe had undertaken this taſk, we ſhould have ſeen the beginning, the progreſs, the ſecret ſprings of her elevation; we ſhould have ſeen what uſe ſhe made of power, what anxiety ſhe ſuffered in grandeur, what languid moments ſhe paſſed in a court.

The private life of the monarch, who raiſed her almoſt to the throne, would have been unveiled; the ſecret intrigues of the court, the principles of facts we ſhall never be able to unfold, made known, and all the miracles of a reign, ſo glorious to the nation, ſo intereſting to mankind, diſplayed.

Indifferent about the opinion of the world, ſurrounded with powerful enemies, or feeble friends, reſtrained by prudence, and perhaps by a promiſe of ſecrecy, humbled even by that fortune ſo well calculated to raiſe and gratify pride, dependent upon the court, although ſeparated from the world, madame de Maintenon, inſtead of writing her life, employed her laſt years in preparing herſelf for death; ſhe had poſſeſſed her grandeur without vanity, ſhe enjoyed her devout retirement without oſtentation.

The reaſons which determined her to ſilence, no longer ſubſiſt; every circumſtance concurs to invite us to break it now; twenty-five years ſooner, the facts would have been too recent; twenty-five years later, they would have been too remote. A hiſtory, written in the midſt of thoſe events which compoſe it, is always ſuſpected either of ſatire or adulation: if written an age afterwards, it is charged with ignorance or error. The proper time for publiſhing truth, is that wherein the publick being near enough to thoſe events to be well informed, and diſtant enough from them to be indifferent, the hiſtorian is permitted to ſpeak that truth, private perſons to approve it, the great to protect it, and kings to hear it.

The letters of madame de Maintenon, thoſe letters wherein her whole heart is with ſuch ſimplicity diſplayed, and where even her wit is artleſs and unadorned, have deſtroyed the greater part of thoſe doubts which were entertained of her character and the place ſhe filled. After her death, ſhe was calumniated by the poſterity of thoſe perſons who adored her moſt while ſhe lived, as if the children were deſirous to take revenge for the ſubmiſſion, perhaps mean adulation, practiſed by their fathers, by attacking a virtue which alone could excuſe it.

All that the court has moſt reſpectable, all that Paris has moſt candid and judicious, have with pleaſure diſmiſſed their prejudices; and madame de Maintenon, whoſe character was a problem, that each one, according to his own notions, or vices, attempted to explain, may at length be ſhewn ſuch as ſhe was. We have, by the moſt diligent reſearches, been able to diſcover circumſtances concerning which ſhe would have been ſilent: but under a prince who is a friend to truth and virtue, we are certainly permitted to ſpeak the one and to defend the other; and in this age, too enlightened to be unjuſt, too full of levity to be wicked, we may hope to be believed, although our aſſertions contradict the malignity of the human heart.

The

The charitable and pious foundation of Saint-Cyr, would doubtleſs be ſufficient to prove, what ties thoſe were which united the man and woman, by whom that community was inſtituted, if we had not known that the wages of ſin have been often employed in building pyramids in Aſia, and convents in Europe. 'What 'then was that woman, poſterity will ſay, that from 'the year one thouſand ſix hundred and eighty-five, 'to one thouſand ſeven hundred and fifteen, lived in 'the utmoſt familiarity with a prince who had had ſo 'many miſtreſſes, and was in the ſtrength of his age 'when he attached himſelf to her? yet, during this 'commerce, he expreſſed a great zeal for religion; he 'often received the ſacred bread; he commanded his 'courtiers to ſerve God: thus it is that licentiouſneſs 'unites itſelf with devotion, and thus do the confeſſors 'of kings ſport with all that is moſt ſacred in religion.' The intereſt of religion therefore, the honour of the late king, require that the character of the lady whom he loved ſo long, ſhould be made known to the world. The fear of injuring the majeſty of the throne, a vain fear founded upon court prejudices, ought doubtleſs to yield to that more juſt one, of ſeeing the greateſt of our kings accuſed of being either weak enough to impoſe upon his conſcience for thirty years together, or ſo confirmed an hypocrite as to deceive his ſubjects during ſo long a time.

Such were the motives that determined me to undertake this work; the firſt volume of which, publiſhed at Copenhagen in 1751, reprinted at Frankfort in 1752, appeared at Paris in 1753. A feeble draught of my deſign, hazarded with the hope that thoſe perſons, who were moſt intereſted in it, would furniſh me with traits enough to complete the picture.

I was deceived in my expectations: the community of Saint-Cyr, the relations of madame de Maintenon, even her heirs, although they did not condemn my deſign, refuſed to aſſiſt it: but the zeal of many other perſons to whom her memory was dear, although they were not connected with her by ties of blood, or obliga-

ons of gratitude, comforted me for the refuſal I ſuffered from her family: a refuſal which has been advantageous to the reader, ſince it has left to the hiſtorian that freedom which truth requires, without leſſening his information. My work will not pleaſe the relations of madame de Maintenon, perhaps; but I ſhall not ſcruple to ſay, that it was not undertaken with a view to pleaſe them; unknown to the greater part of them, diſcouraged by ſome, indifferent to all, I have had no prejudices to guard againſt, no flattery to avoid.

So many cabinets have been opened to me, I have been furniſhed with ſo many memoirs, that my plan, contrary to my intention, became more extenſive. My deſign was to write the hiſtory of madame de Maintenon, and I have written that of her age.

That I might make uſe of all my materials, I choſe a title, which, without leading me from the principal object of my deſign, permitted me to take in more. The memoirs of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, the grand-father of madame de Maintenon, offered me facts of the moſt intereſting kind, and very little known. Many events in the age of Lewis the Fourteenth were naturally connected with my ſubject. The private hiſtory of that prince appeared to me to belong to that of madame de Maintenon; how was it poſſible to reject ſuch abundance, ſuch uſeful and ſuch intereſting anecdotes? by taking in ſuch variety, my book is indeed become more irregular; but it is alſo more inſtructive.

In no other hiſtory can there be found ſo many anecdotes concerning Lewis the Fourteenth. In all that I relate, I quote my authorities; I am not equally exact in ſhewing the ſources from whence I have drawn them: ſurely it is not neceſſary to produce witneſſes to facts atteſted by the ſeal of publick faith.

Such little circumſtances will, by ſome perſons, be judged beneath the gravity of hiſtory; but certainly whatever unfolds and diſplays the hearts of princes, is worthy of an hiſtorian's pen, and what more effectually unfolds them than thoſe ſallies of temper, which the ſovereign repreſſes, but which eſcape the man?

to

to know thoroughly the maſters of the world, we muſt view them behind the ſcene, in the midſt of their family and domeſticks; we muſt contemplate them in thoſe moments, when, reſtored to themſelves, they ſuffer their natural diſpoſitions to appear no longer conſtrained by the preſence of an obſerving courtier, or a penetrating ambaſſador. We every where ſee Lewis the Fourteenth ſurrounded with luſtre, acting with firmneſs, ſpeaking with majeſty. We no where behold him converſing with the eaſe of friendſhip, liſtening with complacency, deliberating freely. We every where meet with the immortal man, and it is the private man we wiſh to ſee. The ſovereign of Louvois is ſufficiently known; we ſeek to be made acquainted with the maſter of Bontems.

Such minute ſtrokes, as diſplay the private life of the monarch, would doubtleſs be improper in the picture of his age. Small objects would be abſurdly contraſted with the grandeur of the deſign, and retard the execution of it; but, rejected by general hiſtories, they become more precious to memoirs, and are eagerly collected by curioſity. Intereſting by the names of thoſe perſonages to whom they belong, they are enobled by an idea of grandeur, neceſſarily connected with that age.

From whence proceeds that nameleſs charm in the lives of Plutarch, but from thoſe little incidents which ſuperficial wits affect to deſpiſe; but which the philoſophick mind combines, compares, reſolves? The private hiſtories of thoſe men who have civilized the world is equally pleaſing, and more uſeful than the hiſtory of thoſe empires who have enſlaved it. The Rome of Florus is read with coldneſs, the Auguſtus of Suetonius with rapture.

The reign of Lewis the Fourteenth has introduced ſo many alterations in arts, in manners, in the civil government, and publick policy, that for the reaſoning, and for the political part of mankind, it will be a celebrated epocha, which our ſons will ſtudy with attention. They will conſider this prince as the

tutelary genius of the French empire; whatever concerns him will be dear to them, and their boundleſs curioſity will reproach us with our indifference. Although, by this age, the converſations between the arch-biſhop of Cambray and madame de Maintenon are read with contempt, our children will read them with pleaſure, and our grand-children with tranſport; and even this age, although ſo diſguſted with all uſeful knowledge, would read with eagerneſs the advice of the high-prieſt of Egypt to the ſecret wife of Seſoſtris.

But there are writers, who from an exceſs of idleneſs, or from a mean compliance with a vitiated taſte, who ſeem to have conſpired the deſtruction of all hiſtorical truth; either becauſe theſe perſons have not leiſure to read, or are apprehenſive that they themſelves will not be read; they bring back all events to certain fixed points, ſtrip them of circumſtances, and preſent to the reader's view the ſcattered limbs of a body, which the warm ſtyle of hiſtory might have re-animated. Theſe little books, the productions of lazineſs and inattention, are read with eager curioſity: hence that progreſs of ſuperficial wit, that diſguſt for uſeful ſtudy, that imperfect knowledge, even in perſons whoſe taſte would lead them to the deepeſt reſearches. A work ſingular in this kind, abounding in facts, full of taſte and wit, learned, yet with an air of levity, dear even to hiſtory, if it was not become the diſgrace of it, had prodigious ſucceſs, which every edition encreaſed, and merited to encreaſe. Several other writers aſpired to the ſame glory; the preſs brought forth nothing but chronological abridgments; under pretence of lopping off ſuperfluities, they have deprived us of what is neceſſary. Hiſtory is a large body, which increaſes in proportion as the world grows older: abreviators, by firſt making a ſkeleton of it, have at laſt reduced it to an atom.

To attack thus the very eſſence of hiſtory, was little in compariſon of their attempt to deſtroy the liberty of it. How have theſe writers declaimed againſt reflections!

flections! the freedom of which, ſeem authorized by the reverence due to hiſtorical truth. Should any heavy, dry critick, preſume to demonſtrate their inutility, he will be told, that hiſtory is not ſubjected to the laws of romance; that it is ſufficient, if a romance be intereſting and amuſing, but that the nobler aim of hiſtory is to inſtruct; that Tacitus, the firſt of hiſtorians, every where abounds with reflections; his authority is ſufficient to prove, that reflections may be introduced with propriety; the wiſdom of his own, evinces their utility. The wiſe, to whom they are not neceſſary, love them; by the ſuperficial, who have need of them, they are proſcribed.

Inſtead of ſuch reflections, the ſallies of an elevated genius, the produce of deep meditation, we every where meet with portraits, ſtruck out with all the warmth of an ardent imagination, adorned with all the ſhining jargon of language. I have carefully avoided ſo dangerous an example. The actions of the principal perſons in theſe memoirs, ſufficiently explain their characters: ſuch, indeed, as the nature of my work does not permit me to introduce often enough, to be thoroughly known, I have attempted to draw. Men, on different occaſions, are ſo little like themſelves, it ſo ſeldom happens that their hiſtorians have ſeen them, and thoſe that have ſeen them, have generally hit their likeneſs ſo ill, that to aim at drawing characters, is almoſt to promiſe a romance. They are deſirous that the picture ſhould be like; and they give ſuch a colouring to facts, as may beſt ſuit their deſign. The characters of men have been often determined by the peculiar circumſtances they have been placed in. Theſe hiſtorians accommodate circumſtances to their characters.

Nothing is more difficult to diſcover, than the true characters of perſons in publick life; and all the details of hiſtory, have rather told us what they appeared, than what they really were. With regard to madame de Maintenon, who, at Saint-Cyr, was conſidered as a ſaint, at court as a hypocrite, at Paris as a woman of wit, in all the reſt of Europe as a diſſolute woman, I

have

have left facts to ſpeak. It is certain, that finding her cruelly aſperſed in innumerable libels, where diſcontented placemen, too credulous foreigners, and bigotted ſectaries, charge a woman, whoſe name they hardly knew, with the vices of an Agrippina or Brunhalt, I was convinced, that not to aſſert the truth, was to be an accomplice in the falſhood; I have therefore treated this part rather with the warmth of an apologiſt, than the calm temper of an hiſtorian: but if I have combated prejudice and injuſtice, with too much ardour, that ardour is juſtified by its motive. All true citizens ought to unite againſt theſe ſcandalous ſatires, which diſguiſe truth, perpetuate calumny, diſcourage virtue, and violate that reſpect which is due to the publick.

However, the zeal with which I have endeavoured to defend madame de Maintenon, has had no influence on my candour; I have diſſembled, I have omitted, nothing; bold conjectures, injurious verſes, malignant cenſures, all are impartially related. Truth, when oppoſed to falſhood, will ſhine out with greater luſtre: to refute falſhood, it is often only neceſſary to repeat it.

I could not avoid entering into a detail of the differences which divided the church; but I have endeavoured to reconcile the reſpect due to religion, with the integrity due to hiſtory, and the ſentiments of a chriſtian, convinced that in any communion, eccleſiaſtical toleration is dangerous, with the language of a Frenchman, who acknowledges the claim, that all errors in religion have to civil toleration.

I do not flatter myſelf with the hope of pleaſing ſuch perſons, whoſe heated imaginations confound zeal for any opinion in religion, with reverence to thoſe who are the heads or defenders of it: according to them, to break the idol, and to diſcover the errors of thoſe who have invented or adored it, is the ſame thing. Hiſtory is a witneſs, and they would make it a party; hiſtory is diveſted of all paſſions, and they would animate it with their fiery zeal. I perceived that I was treading upon two fires, covered with fallacious aſhes;

aſhes *; but I conſidered, that the hiſtorian who offends no perſon, is very unfortunate.

If I am blamed by churchmen for having dared to reveal the weakneſſes of ſome celebrated prelates; my anſwer will be, that, to the dead, hiſtory owes nothing but truth; and that it is an inſult to religion, to believe it depends upon the virtues or vices of its miniſters. If they alledge, that the diſputes of divines are to be regarded with a reſpectful ſilence by a laick, a laick has already anſwered for me; 'As long as you engage in our affairs, we are at 'liberty to ſpeak at leaſt of yours.'

Theſe memoirs take in ſo many objects, that they will probably pleaſe by their variety. Facts have often engroſſed that attention which I owed to words. I have endeavoured to riſe with my ſubject, I have aſpired to the praiſe of deſcending with it likewiſe. I have uſed my utmoſt endeavours to prevent falling too much into that energetick brevity, ſo emulated by a writer. An hiſtorian ought never to forget that he may one day be read by Laplanders.

Monſieur de Voltaire's critique, on the firſt ſketch of this work, has been of great uſe to me: if he will condeſcend to make a critique on the whole work, I ſhall be ſtill more obliged to him. No one is better qualified for ſuch a taſk than he is; no one will be more ready to ſubmit to correction than myſelf.

This work is chiefly drawn from manuſcripts, of which the greater part will never ſee the light. Such ſecret memoirs, have indeed, been very much decried, ever ſince Varillas quoted chimerical manuſcripts, to authenticate fictitious anecdotes; but this impoſture of Varillas's, was detected by the contradiction that appeared in his ſtory, and my veracity will be proved by the combination of facts. Varillas's manuſcripts belied the moſt certain events, mine confirm, fix, and explain them.

The

* Incedo per Ignes
Suppoſitos cineri doloſo.

The families of Saint L.... and of N...., who are well acquainted with moſt of the facts which I relate, ſuppoſed that they only were in poſſeſſion of thoſe manuſcripts, from whence I have taken them: they will be ſtill more ſurpriſed at the new diſcoveries I have made, than they were at the firſt edition; many of the facts there mentioned, they acknowledged to be true.

Theſe manuſcrips are, firſt, the *ſouvenirs* of the ladies de G... and de P..., who carefully collected every word that fell from madame de Maintenon, and whoſe various enquiries, concerning the incidents of the firſt years of her life, often led her into a detail of them.

Secondly, the life of madame de Maintenon, by mademoiſelle d'Aumale, her pupil, her friend, and her confidant.

Thirdly, the memoirs of the Sieur Manſeau, her ſteward, who wrote three large volumes, with the ſimplicity and candour of a father, whoſe chief end was to inſtruct his children.

Fourthly, the memoirs of the abbé Pirot, doctor of the Sorbonne.

Fifthly, the memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau, ſo highly eſteemed by the abbé de Choiſi, and by all who have read them.

Sixthly, the memoirs of monſieur Hébert, curate of Verſailles, afterwards biſhop of Agen. This prelate, who was always concerned in the affairs of the church, and always well informed of the affairs of ſtate, enjoyed, during twenty years, the confidence of Lewis the Fourteenth, and madame de Maintenon. In his retirement at his own dioceſe, he wrote the hiſtory of the ſeveral events of which he had been witneſs, with all the preciſion of a man who had ſeen every thing, and with all the freedom of a man who wrote only for himſelf. Monſieur des M.... is proprietor of the original, and well deſerves the truſt; he is preparing a faithful edition of this work, enriched with notes. The curious will acknowledge, that he could not have made them a more agreeable preſent, nor one executed with more taſte.

The

The late archbiſhop of S. . . . has written a hiſtory of madame de Maintenon: I could not procure the liberty of examining it: it will never appear in print; and I am told, the publick will not have any great loſs of it.

It is my earneſt wiſh, that this work may engage thoſe, who are poſſeſſed of uſeful materials for the hiſtory of the laſt age, at length to publiſh them, and raiſe a more durable monument to the glory of our country.

So many perſons are intereſted in the ſuppreſſion of truth, that at preſent it is either impoſſible or imprudent to publiſh it. Under Lewis the Fourteenth, this argument was urged, by thoſe who diſapproved of every book that was written with any freedom; and this is the cauſe that we have never had, and never ſhall have, a good hiſtory of Lewis the Thirteenth. The moſt valuable manuſcripts wander from the ſubject, are filled up with verſes, are carefully concealed, or fall into the hands of a fool, who deſpiſes them, a nobleman who burns them, or a devotee, who mutilates them.

When may we again hope to ſee the rulers of the world, employ their leiſure hours in writing the annals of it? They durſt write all, at the very time when all might be known. Truth was not ſuppreſſed through fear, nor diſguiſed by adulation; power was not capable of perſecuting, nor authority of puniſhing it. In this age, ſome perſons, more ſcrupulous than wiſe, would confine the hiſtorian to the barren merit of ſtyle; ſuperſtition, ignorance, falſhood, puerile delicacy, have attempted to reduce him to the agreeable only, and to proſcribe the uſeful and the true. Thus the hiſtorians of the reign, or the painters of the Age of Lewis the Fourteenth, have given us nothing but extracts from the Gazette, or humourous ſatires upon facts; while Comines, de Thou, d'Aubigné, cardinal de Retz, have had no other dread but of the publick cenſure, have ſoared above prejudice, and ſtill give us delight.

However, it muſt be acknowledged, that hiſtory begins to reſume its former freedom, and aſſert its claims.

We

We have ſeen ſome happy moments, when truth, with a noble boldneſs, has forced itſelf into light; a natural effect of the progreſs of human reaſon, the happy conſequence of the wiſdom and moderation of the monarch under whom we live. The prince who does not fear the integrity of hiſtory, will not attempt to reſtrain its freedom.

It is now time to become ſenſible, that to ſuppreſs the truth, is to give credibility to the fabulous. In vain would hiſtorians attempt to conceal from the publick, the principal circumſtances of an event, the traces of it remain; contemporaries purſue them, connect them, fill up the voids by conjectures, and tranſmit to their credulous poſterity, a thouſand ſatirical tales. They have dreaded blame, and are expoſed to outrage; they were only ridiculous, and they are ſuppoſed to be wicked: they were apprehenſive of exciting the tranſient murmurs of the capital, and they have incurred for ever the indignation of all mankind.

A calif, whoſe ſway is confirmed by ignorance, may devote the libraries of the Ptolemies and the Cæſars to the flames. A wiſe and virtuous prince is deſirous that his people ſhould be illumined by truth, the image of the Almighty, when he ſaid, *Let there be light.*

If my frankneſs be diſpleaſing, yet I cannot ſurely be condemned for not having deſpaired of the candour of my age. To offer fourteeen volumes, is a proof how high an idea I have of it: I found ſo many original pieces in my poſſeſſion, that I have been obliged to enlarge my plan, notwithſtanding my extreme deſire to the contrary: but perhaps, this collection may appear ſhort, even to beaux and beauties, becauſe it is intereſting.

MEMOIRS

MEMOIRS FOR THE HISTORY OF Madam de *Maintenon*, And of the LAST AGE.

CHAPTER I.

The Family of D'AUBIGNE'.

FRANCES D'AUBIGNE' Marchioneſs of MAINTENON, whoſe Life I am now to write, was deſcended from the Family of Aubigné, the antiquity of which has never been conteſted. Its original ſtock is in the province of Anjou, but ſeveral branches of it ſpread themſelves in Berry, Poitou and Guienne, under the names of d'Aubigny, d'Aubigné, d'Aubignac,

nac, according to the different pronunciation of the counties where they ſettled. Theſe ſeveral terminations deſtroyed not the unity of the name, which general word ſignifies the reſidence of one Albinus, or Aubin.*

This name ſeems to inſinuate a Roman origin: but without ſtopping to conſider pretenſions, ſupported by conjectures which vanity may ſuggeſt, we can aſſure our readers, that the family of Aubigné can prove an equal antiquity with the moſt noble families of Europe; ſince at the time that the inſtitution of fiefs eſtabliſhed ſurnames and made them hereditary, we find them proprietors of the lordſhip of Aubigné in Anjou: from this lordſhip they either took their name, or gave it theirs. Titles are loſt by time, by war, or by ignorance: theſe three deſtroyers of ancient monuments yet leave us one of d'Aubigné in the twelfth age.

In the year 1160, Geoffry d'Aubigné poſſeſſed in Sirie an eſtate of that name, with the quality of knight, then the reward of valour, and the diſtinction of nobility. John Sire d'Aubigné, ſon of Geoffry d'Aubigné, was honoured likewiſe with the ſame title, which was given him by an act in 1201.

It was obtained by all the other Lords of Aubigné in the thirteenth age, as Oliver father of Aimery father of William.

William Lord of Aubigné and of Couldrai-Macouart, a little town at two leagues diſtance from Saumur, married Eleanor de Coëme, by whom he had iſſue Savary II. Knight-commander for the King of England in Chinon, in the year 1329: he was the ſtock of the branches of Aubigné-Couldrai, of La Ferriere, Bois-moſé and Montaupin; and Peter the II. Lord of La Touche in Anjou, diſtant a league from Aubigné.

Of the marriage of Peter d'Aubigné with Mary des Rivaux, was born Guyon I. who married Jane de l'Epine, lady of Jouſſeliniere, by whom he had Morelet d'Aubigné, Ecuïer, Lord of La Touche and La Jouſſe-

* See Du Cheſne's Hiſtory of the Houſe of Montmorenci, Book i. Chap. 2.

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 67 NOV

Jouſſeliniere, who in 1404 married Margaret des Hayes Gaſſelin.

His ſon Tibalt d'Aubigné, who in conſideration of his nobility was made Ecuïer of the king's ſtables in 1450, married Jane de la Parniere: by her he had Francis d'Aubigné, from whom proceeded the branches of La Roche-Ferriere, Boisrobert, and Tigny; and Antony d'Aubigné, who married Charlotte de Brie.

It is remarkable that all the genealogies of the houſe of Aubigné, whether in manuſcript, or printed, make mention of this Antony, but none of them give him either wife or children, and yet they all record a deed which proves his marriage with Charlotte de Brie, and in which his ſon, John d'Aubigné is mentioned. It is to this careleſneſs of the genealogiſts that we muſt doubtleſs impute the error of thoſe who pretend, that the Aubignés of Poitou are not deſcended from the true Aubignés. It is even ſtill affirmed, that this Houſe will not acknowledge any connexion; but ſurely this muſt be falſe, for in its titles there are full proofs of the contrary; beſides is it probable that it would renounce two of its moſt illuſtrious deſcendants? Few families can boaſt ſuch a man as Agrippa d'Aubigné, and ſuch a woman as Madam de Maintenon.

John d'Aubigné, Lord of Brie, married Frances de Viguier, by whom he had Peter d'Aubigné, Lord of Brie and Viguier, who married Catherine de Chourſes.

John the III. his ſon, Lord of Brie, had by Catherine de l'Eſtang his wife, Theodore Agrippa d'Aubergne, Lord of Landes, who married Suſanna de Lezey, by whom he had Conſtant d'Aubigné, Baron of Surineau, who married Jane de Cardillac: from this marriage was born our Francis d'Aubigné, who, from Geoffry d'Aubigné, her firſt known anceſtor, down to herſelf, reckoned ſeventeen generations: an advantage ſo conſiderable, that the firſt families of the kingdom cannot produce a greater number of deſcents.

There are ſome who have endeavoured to prove, that Madam de Maintenon is deſcended from the houſe of Bourbon: while others diſpute her origin

from the true d'Aubignés of Anjou; but we are now going to refute both these errors.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN D'AUBIGNÉ.

JOHN D'AUBIGNÉ, son of Peter d'Aubigné, Lord of Brie in Saintonge, was first married to Mademoiselle de l'Estang. He was educated in the principles of the Roman catholicks, but afterwards embraced the protestant religion.

A gentleman, named Ardené, disputing with him the right of precedence at a procession, John d'Aubigné was obliged to produce his titles: he proved by six marriage contracts, that he and Savary d'Aubigné commander for the king of England in Chinon, had one common ancestor. Commissioners were appointed to visit a certain chapel, built by this Savary d'Aubigné: they found the walls of this edifice adorned with the arms of his family, which were, gules, a lion argent, rampant, armed and languid, or, ermined afterwards by the family of Jousseliere, who were descended from the same stock.

1562.] John d'Aubigné commanded at Orleans under Monsieur de Saint-Cyr. At the battle of Dreux he took the Constable Montmorenci prisoner. At the attack of the little towers of Orleans he received a wound by a pike below his cuiras. His wound was not yet healed when he was chosen by the Huguenots to treat of a peace with the Court, which he concluded with Catherine de Medicis at the isle of Oxen. [March 12, 1563] In consideration of his services, and of this treaty in particular, they gave him the post of honorary-master of requests, by which he became one of the protectors of the Protestants. The queen of Navarre made him her chancellor, and this doubtless gave rise to the report that Madam de Maintenon's grand-father was the son of an advocate, or judge of Pons.

John

John d'Aubigné did not long enjoy his good fortune. He died by the inflammation of his wound. He ſent back the patents of his office to the prince of Condé, entreating him to appoint him a ſucceſſor who would be always ready to ſacrifice his life for the ſervice of the church. He was a man zealous for his religion, even to fanaticiſm. Paſſing by Amboiſe one day, he ſaw upon the gallows he heads of the chief conſpirators ſtill bloody, and was ſo ſhocked and enraged at the ſight, that he exclaimed aloud, tho' he was ſurrounded by ſeven or eight thouſand perſons: 'Ah! the hang-'men, they have beheaded France. My child, (ſaid 'he to his ſon) thy head and mine ought to revenge 'theſe noble chiefs. May my curſe purſue thee, if 'thou ſhouldſt ever forget this catholick cruelty.'

CHAPTER III.

THEODORE AGRIPPA D'AUBIGNE'.

Febr. 1. 1550. THEODORE AGRIPPA D'AUBIGNE', his ſon, was born at St. Maury near Pons: he was named *Agrippa* *, becauſe his birth coſt his mother her life, and was not ſuffered to be brought up in his father's houſe, for Anne de Limours, the ſecond wife of John d'Aubigné, proved to him a cruel and unjuſt mother-in-law.

At four years of Age, he was taught languages and hiſtory by learned and auſtere preceptors: at eight he tranſlated the Crito of Plato: at nine he ſtudied under Matthew Béroalde: at ten he was put in priſon with his maſter, accuſed of hereſy, and heard this terrible ſentence denounced: 'Death or the maſs;' to which he replied: 'The horror of the maſs has taken away 'all fear of death.' At thirteen he loſt his father, who left him no other inheritance but debts: at fourteen he ſtudied mathematicks at Geneva, where he acquired the friendſhip of Theodore de Beza; and continued his ſtudies at Lyons, where, turned out of his lodgings by his landlady, becauſe he could not pay

* Ægre-partus.

her, in the frenzy of his deſpair he was upon the point of throwing himſelf into the river Saône.

When he returned to Saintonge he quitted ſtudy, and thought of nothing but war. Being impriſoned by his truſtee, he came out almoſt naked, was cloathed by ſome officers, and beneath the note he gave for payment, he added theſe words: 'Upon condition, 'that I never exclaim againſt war for ſtripping me, 'ſince it is impoſſible to leave it in a worſe equipage 'then I entered.'

1570.] Full of courage and ardor, animated by poverty itſelf, he ſought only danger and fame, and found both at the ſiege of Pons, at the encounter at Jaſeneuil, at the battle of Jarnac, at the great ſkirmiſh of La Roche-Abeille, and at the ſiege of Archiac.

Catherine de Medicis having given the Proteſtants *their fill of ſermons*, all was again quiet. D'Aubigné returned to Saintonge. His truſtee, to enable him to prove his right, gave him a leaſe of his eſtate Des Landes. An officer, belonging to the duke of Longueville, had taken poſſeſſion of all the orphan's lands. D'Aubigné was received as an impoſtor: the officer attempted to prove, that the true d'Aubigné was ſlain at the battle of Savignac. His catholick relations piouſly abandoned him to his fate. D'Aubigné was taken ill, and in the paroxiſms of a violent fever, he predicted to his unjuſt family, that they would one day pay homage to his deſcendants.*

His ſteward knew him by a ſcar, but treated him as an impoſtor, becauſe he was his ſteward. Diſowned by his relations, deſtitute of money, deprived of all aſſiſtance, burning with an intenſe fever, the poor ſick wretch cauſed himſelf to be carried to Orleans, where, with rage in his heart, and death quivering on his lips, he dragged his weak emaciated body before his Judges. The introduction to his diſcourſe was ſo pathetick, the picture he drew of his miſeries ſo lively, his arguments in ſupport of his claim ſo convincing, that

* Secret Memoirs of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, written by himſelf.

that his Judges, irritated at the injuſtice and cruelty of his adverſaries, cried out with one voice: 'None 'but the ſon of Monſieur d'Aubigné could ſpeak thus.' He was reſtored to the poſſeſſion of all his lands.

It was this proceſs that certainly gave riſe to that report, which long prevailed, concerning Theodore d'Aubigné, who by ſome was ſaid to be the natural ſon of a prince *, by others the ſon of queen Jane d'Albret, who contracted a private marriage with a gentleman whoſe name is unknown.† There needs no more to refute this ſtory entirely than to unite theſe two points of chronology: the one is, that the king of Navarre did not die till November 1561; and the other, that d'Aubigné was born in the year 1550, as appears by his epitaph in the cloiſter of St. Peter at Geneva. It is not, therefore, poſſible, that he ſhould be the ſon of Jane d'Albret, and a gentleman whom

* See the Memoirs of the Marquis de la Fare.

† 'A Genealogiſt had orders to prove, that Madam 'de Maintenon was deſcended from Jane of Albret, 'queen of Navarre, who, after the death of the king 'her huſband, married ſecretly one of her gentlemen; and this gentleman, it is pretended, was the 'father of Monſieur Theodore d'Aubigné, grand-father of Madam de Maintenon.' Thus writes the author of the *Amours of the Kings of France*, vol. xii. pag. 293. printed at Bruſſels 1694. But is it probable, that Madam de Maintenon ſhould give ſuch orders to a genealogiſt, after her brother the count d'Aubigné had cauſed to be inſerted in the *Mercure galant*, Sept. 1688, a genealogy of the Aubignés, in which there is not the leaſt trace of this ſuppoſed extraction any more than in that drawn up by a genealogiſt belonging to the king of England? This is to ſuppoſe, that Madam de Maintenon, who in other reſpects was very indifferent about her nobility, was uncertain of her origin. But her letters to her brother prove, that ſhe was poſſeſſed of ſome private memoirs of her grand-father, which left her in no doubt on that head.

ſhe married after the death of Antony, king of Navarre.

If, inſtead of Jane, they had made Margaret of Navarre, his mother, the falſhood would have been no leſs groſs and abſurd; for Margaret, mother of queen Jane of Navarre, died December 1549, before the king her huſband, and before the birth of d'Aubigné.

Thoſe who affirm him to be the ſon of the king of Navarre, father of queen Jane, can only be refuted by arguments drawn from chronology, ſince this prince did not die till the year 1555. It is mentioned by others beſides M. de Perefix, that in 1553 Jane of Albret had a great deſire to ſee her Father's will, becauſe ſhe had been told, that there were in it ſome clauſes very advantageous to a lady, *whom the good man had loved** But theſe are trifling conjectures which are void of proof, and which it is not even neceſſary to refute by what d'Aubigné has publiſhed, concerning his father, in the Hiſtory of his own times, and in that of his life.

By others it is pretended, that it was Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné himſelf who ſecretly married Jane of Albret, mother of Henry IVth, and that this prince replied to ſome of his friends, who endeavoured to raiſe his reſentment againſt this clandeſtine marriage, 'Why would you have me angry at a thing, 'which there is not one of you but would have done?' and that the queen had a ſon by Theodore d'Aubigné, named Goyon, who was afterwards a miniſter in Holland.†

All this is mere romance: queen Jane of Albret died in the year 1572, and d'Aubigné, whom they pretend had been her chancellor ‡, and favourite, was at that time but twenty four years of age, and known only for his courage, his libertiniſm, and his wit. But, ſuch is the weakneſs and credulity of mankind, to great

* Perefix Hiſtory of Henry IV.

† Bayle's Anſwer to the Queſtions of a Provincial.

‡ Mercure galant, Jan. 1705.

great viciſſitudes of fortune they always add ſomething marvellous.

CHAPTER IV.

D'AUBIGNE' *in the ſervice of the King of* NAVARRE.

D'AUBIGNE', being reſtored to his eſtate, became enamoured of Diana de Talcy. Love made him a poet, and then it was that he compoſed that little collection of poems called *the Spring of d'Aubigné*, which have all the ſoft warmth of that agreeable ſeaſon. He left Paris three days before the maſſacre of Saint Bartholomew, and during four months that a furious and bigotted zeal armed the French againſt their countrymen, he lay concealed at Talcy.

One day when he was recounting his misfortunes to the father of his miſtreſs, and enlarged upon the obſtacles that hindered him from going to Rochelle, the old man ſaid to him. 'The original papers, relating 'to the enterprize of Amboiſe, are in your poſſeſſion: 'in one of them is the ſeal of the chancellor l'Hoſpital, 'who lives now retired from court, uſeleſs to the 'world, and unfaithful to your party. If you will 'allow me to inform him that you have this paper in 'your hands, I will engage to procure you twenty 'thouſand crowns, either from him or from thoſe 'who will make uſe of it to compleat his ruin.'

D'Aubigné went inſtantly for thoſe papers, and in the preſence of Talcy threw them into the fire. 'I am 'poor (ſaid he to him) I may yield to temptation; let 'us burn theſe papers then, leſt they ſhould burn me.' Talcy, charmed with an action ſo generous, and which promiſed ſo much virtue and fortitude, granted him his daughter.

Some days afterwards d'Aubigné fought a duel, was dangerouſly wounded, and travelled twenty leagues, that he might have the conſolation to die in the arms of his miſtreſs. The proctor of the biſhop of Orleans came at the head of ſix officers of juſtice, to force Talcy to deliver up d'Aubigné to him. D'Aubigné, be-

ing informed of this violence, mounted his horſe, put himſelf at the head of the archers, and holding his piſtol cloſe to the proctor's breaſt, obliged him to abjure all the articles of the Roman catholick faith, and forced the officers to deliver to him a certificate in form for the diſcharge of Talcy.

The chevalier de Salviaty, uncle to his intended bride, broke off his marriage on account of the difference of religion. This diſappointment threw d'Aubigné into a fit of ſickneſs, and occaſioned the death of mademoiſelle de Talcy.

After the peace of Rochelle the king of Navarre received d'Aubigné into his ſervice as a bold and reſolute man, who ſought only to raiſe himſelf, or die. Henry, then a priſoner, was ſo cloſely obſerved, that he durſt not make this agreement between them public, however the queen mother ſuſpected it. D'Aubigné leaving the chamber of Charles IXth, who had juſt expired, the queen, prejudiced by Matignon who had not forgot that Henry's new equery had formerly held a piſtol to his head, uſed ſome threats to him, telling him he would be like his father. 'Would to God I 'may,' replied d'Aubigné, and withdrew.

From the court he went into Germany, where he was preſent at the taking of Archicourt, at the battle of the bridge of Aiſne, and the next day at the battle of Dormans. It was this journey into Germany that introduced him to the acquaintance and familiarity of M. de Guiſe; and he took advantage of theſe firſt favourable impreſſions to form a ſtrict correſpondence between that prince and the king of Navarre. He was the ſoul of all their pleaſures, and the inventer of all their diverſions: he compoſed the *Maſk of Circe* *, which the queen mother would not ſuffer to be repreſented upon account of the expence, but which was afterwards performed at the nuptials of the duke of Joyeuſe.

CHAP-

* M. du Cahuſac, in his treatiſe on dancing, gives Circe to another, and accuſes d'Aubigné of having ſtolen it.

CHAPTER V.

Flight of the king of NAVARRE.

MONSIEUR and the king of Navarre remained priſoners at the court, ſtill feared and ſtill ſuſpected: the arrival of Henry III. king of Poland and now king of France, gave them more liberty. The queen mother contented herſelf with placing ſix and twenty ſpies about them. Monſieur made his eſcape, and the king of Navarre was more ſtrictly confined. Of all his attendants, they left him only Aubigny * his equery, Armagnac, and Jonquieres.

One night d'Aubigné obſerving Henry to tremble in his bed with a violent fit of an ague, and that he repeated groaning that verſe of the 88th pſalm, where the royal prophet laments his ſeparation from his faithful friends, he drew the curtain, and ſpoke to him in this manner:

'Then it is true, Sire, that the Spirit of God ſtill 'dwells within you. You are lamenting the abſence of 'your friends, alas, they are groaning for your liber-'ty: you have tears in your eyes, they have arms in 'their hands. They fight againſt your enemies, and 'you obey them: they fill them with real terrors, 'you ſoften them by falſe hopes: they fear God, you 'a woman, before whom you ſit with folded hands, 'while your friends graſp their weapons with theirs. 'Monſieur is at the head of thoſe, who defended 'your infancy. They follow with regret the auſpices 'of him who worſhips his God in a different manner 'from them. By what enchantment is it, that you 'rather chuſe to be a ſlave here than a maſter there? 'to ſubmit with ignominy, than to be great with ju-'ſtice? Are you not weary of concealing your vir-'tues from yourſelf? Ought a prince like you to live 'idle

* In the hiſtory of his own times, and the memoirs of his life, he is ſometimes called d'Aubigné and ſometimes d'Aubigny.

'idle and inactive? Thoſe who are guilty of the 'maſſacre of St. Bartholomew remember it yet, and 'cannot believe that thoſe who underwent it, have 'forgot it. Cowardice cannot procure you a ſure aſy-'lum, for here the ſerpent is concealed under flow-'ers; diſtruſt this court, where you ſleep in the bo-'ſom of pleaſures, dread this Catherine always cruel 'and now falſe; be no longer guilty of high-treaſon 'towards yourſelf. Armagnac and I muſt leave you to-'morrow: reflect, Sire, reflect, that when we are 'gone, the hands by whom you will be ſerved, will 'not ſcruple to employ poiſons and daggers againſt 'you.'

This diſcourſe prepared the mind of Henry *to repudiate pleaſures, and to eſpouſe dangers.** Henry having demanded a new-year's gift of d'Aubigné, he preſented him a noſegay compoſed of olive, laurel, and cypreſs, with a ſonnet, the purport of which was; make a good peace, conquer, or die.

The king of Navarre aſſembling ſix of his courtiers, ſhut himſelf up with them, embraced them tenderly, preſented them his hand to kiſs, making them ſwear at the ſame time, to bear eternal hatred to that perſon who ſhould betray their enterprize. It was reſolved, that at a party for hunting they ſhould attempt to make their eſcape. There was a traitor amongſt them, and this was Fervaques. D'Aubigné, catching hold of him, cried, 'What have you done?' 'Go (anſwered 'Fervaques) I am a wretch, ſave your maſter.' D'Aubigné went immediately with this news to the king. 'Fervaques (ſaid he) has diſcovered all to the queen, 'he has confeſſed his treachery to me. Paris is the 'road to death and infamy, every where elſe life and 'glory may be found, but more certainly at Alençon 'or Sedan: it is time to leave your priſon, and throw 'yourſelf into the boſom of your friends.' The king mounted his horſe that inſtant: they purſued him: he was

* D'Aubigné's Hiſt. univerſelle.

was already at Alençon, where, as he entered a church, these verses of a psalm were singing: *

'Oh Lord! the king shall rejoice in his deliverance.'

The king of Navarre, always active, and always amorous, fought his enemies, gained battles, and attacked the heart of Mademoiselle de Tignonville, who resisted all his assaults. D'Aubigné, by his valour, his wit, and the agreeableness of his person, was become a favourite of the ladies. Henry entreated him to assist him in this intrigue. D'Aubigné, who would not have refused this service to a friend, denied it nobly to his king, who was weak enough to throw himself several times at his feet, to obtain it. 'You are (said d'Aubigné to him) master of my life, 'but suffer me to be the master of my honour.'

His obstinate refusal offended Henry, and drew upon him some neglect from the court, for which d'Aubigné comforted himself by a close application to the study of history, and poetry. To this study he gave all the time which he had before appropriated to his pleasures. But he abused his talents, and by his satirical verses, took too cruel a revenge upon his enemies. He hated the chancellor Birague, and he wrote this epipram against him:

Tels sont les faits des hommes que les dits.
Le roi dit bien, d'autant qu'il sait bien faire:
Son chancelier est bien tout au contraire,
Car il dit mal, & fait encore pis.

'The nature of man is to act as he talks. The 'king speaks well, in the same proportion as he 'acts well: but with his chancellor it is quite 'opposite; for he speaks ill, and acts still worse.'

CHAP.

* See d'Aubigné's universal History, vol. ii. chap. 18. book ii.

CHAPTER VI.

D'Aubigne' *in diſgrace.*

THE great favour d'Aubigné had enjoyed, began viſibly to decreaſe; his friends adviſed him to regain it, by ſoothing the paſſions of his prince. Sometimes they quoted to him the examples of the catholick courtiers, who ſerved without reluctance the pleaſures of their maſter: at other times they repreſented to him, how uſeful he might be to the party, if he would endeavour to gain the heart of the king; nothing was able to ſhake him.

But if his firmneſs loſt him the friendſhip of Henry, it could not deprive him of his eſteem. He was ſent into the provinces of Guienne, Perigord, Poitou, Normandy, and Artois, to prepare them for war. The queen mother, who was informed of this commiſſion, ſent orders to arreſt him: but he took ſuch meaſures, that he acquitted himſelf of it, without falling into the hands of thoſe enemies by whom he was ſurrounded. When he returned to Gaſcony, and preſented himſelf to the king of Navarre, he received no other reward for his ſervices than the picture of that prince, underneath which he wrote the following lines:

Ce Prince eſt d'étrange nature,
Je ne ſai qui diable l'a fait:
Ceux qui le ſervent en effet,
Il les récompenſe en peinture.

'I know not what the plague is the matter; but 'this prince of mine is an odd being, he expects 'ſervices in ſubſtance, but gives rewards in ſha'dows.'

The eagerneſs with which he ſought every opportunity of acquiring glory, and the freedom of his diſcourſe, excited great envy, and raiſed him many enemies. However he ſtill preſerved the eſteem of his maſter, who ſent him into Languedoc to confirm in his

his intereſt thoſe of his party there, who began to waver. In this journey he was expoſed to a thouſand dangers, which the reader may ſee deſcribed in his General Hiſtory.*

Henry being irritated againſt him by falſe reports, d'Aubigné was informed that he had taken a reſolution very unfavourable for him, and he ſpoke to the king thus in the preſence of the whole court: 'You 'have then, Sire, been capable of entertaining a de- 'ſign to deſtroy the man whom God appointed to 'preſerve your life. I do not upbraid you with this 'ſervice, or with the wounds I have received for 'you. But am I criminal in your eyes, becauſe I 'can neither be a mean flatterer, nor the miniſter 'of your pleaſures? I pardon you the cruel ingrati- 'tude you meditate againſt me: but will your con- 'ſcience pardon it in yourſelf? You are reſolved to 'baniſh me. Of what value can life be to me, when 'I live no longer for you?

The king greatly ſhocked at this diſcourſe, roſe from table, and ſhewed his reſentment by ſeveral very bitter replies. D'Aubigné left the court, took leave of the king of Navarre without alighting from his horſe, and went to Caſtle-jaloux, of which he was governor, and defended it againſt Admiral Villars.

A peace was concluded, and d'Aubigné ſent this adieu to the king of Navarre: 'Sire, your memory 'will reproach you with twelve years of my ſervices, 'and twelve wounds which I have received for you. 'It will recall to your mind your priſon: the hand, 'that now writes to you, broke its bars, and has re- 'mained pure in your ſervice: it has not been filled 'with your benefactions, and could no more be cor- 'rupted by your enemies than by yourſelf. I here 'recommend you to God, to whom I give my paſt ſer- 'vices, and my future to you, by which I will endea- 'vour to prove, that in loſing me, you have loſt a 'faithful ſervant.'

D'Au-

* Chapter vii. and xii.

D'Aubigné enjoyed ſo great a reputation in his party, that in an aſſembly of Proteſtants, which was held at Sainte-Foy, the deputies from Languedoc aſked Henry, where was d'Aubigné, who had ſaved their province, and what he had done with him, who was ſo uſeful a ſervant of God? The king promiſed them, that he would recall him.

D'Aubigné having formed a deſign of ſelling his eſtate and his ſervices to prince Caſimir, the ſon of the elector Palatine, he left Caſtle-jaloux to take leave of his friends in Poitou. On his arrival at St. Gelais, he perceived at a window Mademoiſelle de Lézey of the family of Vivonne: the firſt look began a conqueſt of his heart, the firſt converſation compleated it. This new paſſion revived the love of his country, drew him from inactivity, and made him again ambitious of glory. He reſolved to make himſelf neceſſary to his party, agreeable to his miſtreſs, and regretted by his maſter.

CHAPTER VII.

D'Aubigné *recalled to Court. His Marriage.*

THE boldeſt ſchemes were now formed and executed by d'Aubigné. He went to reconnoitre Nantes, ſurprized Montaigu and Limoges, and performed exploits which the king took pleaſure in relating to his courtiers, and which forced him to recall him to court. Henry probably made this conceſſion either to appeaſe the Proteſtants, or through fear that duke Caſimir, ſtrengthened with ſuch a ſupport, ſhould declare himſelf Protector of the reformed churches, or becauſe in thoſe unhappy times the king, being always ſurrounded with traitors, became at laſt ſenſible how neceſſary a good and faithful man was to him.

Henry wrote four letters to d'Aubigné, who threw them all into the fire without reading them: but being informed, that the king, upon the report of his being taken priſoner at Limoges, had deſtined ſome of the queen's jewels for his ranſom, and had put on mourning

ing for him, when it was given out that he was beheaded; he was greatly affected with these tokens of a sincere and tender friendship. All the young nobility of the court of Navarre were rejoiced at his return, and went to meet him; the king received him with a distinction highly flattering to his vanity: the ministers made entertainments for him: queen Margaret, *whom Henry III. had given to all the Huguenots of the kingdom*, spread all her attractions for him. D'Aubigné was now a declared favourite.

Henry again resolved to take arms: Turenne, Favas, Constant, and d'Aubigné were alone admitted to his Council. All four were lovers. D'Aubigné performed wonders at the enterprize of Blaye, at the siege of Montaigu, and hindred Rochelle from being surprized. His brother was killed in the skirmish of La Barilliere, and was interred in the vault belonging to the dukes of Thouars: this was his first campaign. The only lesson d'Aubigné gave him, was, to be always careful of his life, but not covetous of it; the young officer replied: 'I will soon have the satisfac-'tion of gaining a name, or of being nothing.' *

The king of Navarre passing one day by Cardillac, desired Francis de Candale to shew him his cabinet, promising to bring with him those only of his courtiers who had taste enough to admire its beauties. He chose for this party Clervaut, Mornay, Saint-Aldegonde, Constant, Pelliſſon, and d'Aubigné, whom Charles IX. had admitted into the academy which met twice a week in his closet. While the company diverted themselves with seeing a child of six years old raise a cannon by the help of a little machine, d'Aubigné wrote the following Latin distich upon Monsieur de Candale's tablets:

Non istæc, Princeps, regem tractare doceto,
Sed doctâ regni pondera ferre manu.

'Not these, O Prince, instruct a king to wield,
'But rather the enormous weight of reign,'

Ah!

* D'Aubigné's General History, book x. p. 373.

Ah! cried M. de Candale when he read theſe verſes, this is a man indeed!

Henry, who believed d'Aubigné was as capable of recording great actions, as of performing them, expreſſed a deſire to have him write his hiſtory. D'Aubigné, being but ill ſatisfied with the king's conduct hitherto, replied boldly: 'Sire, begin to act; and then 'I will begin to write.' At that time he was afraid his ſubject was too mean for him, he afterwards was apprehenſive it was too great.

1581.] The queen of Navarre, having returned to court, took great advantage of the king's abſence, who was in love with the counteſs of Guiche, the widow of Grammont. Her amour with Chanvalon was diſcovered, and the king reproached her ſeverely with her bad conduct. The queen ſuſpected, that d'Aubigné had told him all, and in revenge accuſed him of want of zeal for the intereſt of his maſter. Henry received this calumny like a man, who well knew both his wife, and his equery. *

1582.] In a conference held at Saint-Maixant between the queen-mother, the queen of Navarre, and Henry, the two princeſſes threw themſelves at his feet, and intreated him to baniſh d'Aubigné. Henry promiſed to grant their requeſt; commanded d'Aubigné in public to quit the court, but in private forbid him to obey. The exile kept himſelf concealed all day, and lay every night in his maſter's chamber; in the morning diſgraced, at night a favourite.

1583.] Weary at length of this conſtraint, d'Aubigné left the court and went to viſit Mademoiſelle de Lezey, to whom the king wrote ſeveral letters in his favour. His rivals affirmed, that they were counterfeited, and that it was not probable, a baniſhed man would be ſo highly honoured. The king came in perſon to St. Gelais, and gave entertainments to Mademoiſelle de Lezey. D'Aubigné's paſſion was croſſed by a great number of rivals. The prince of Conde declared for the braveſt, Mademoiſelle de Lezey for the moſt

* D'Aubigné's Hiſt. univerſelle.

moſt agreeable, and her guardian for the richeſt. At d'Aubigné's deſire one of his friends told the lady's guardian, that the only means, by which he could rid the young lady of this importunate lover, was, to require of him titles of nobility, which he could not produce. The guardian fell into the ſnare: articles were drawn, by which Meſſieurs de Dampierre, de Rets, de Niſſac, de la Rochefoucault, all of them relations of Mademoiſelle de Lezey, obliged themſelves to ſign the contract of marriage as ſoon as d'Aubigné had proved the antiquity of his nobility, with this clauſe on his part, that he ſhould deſiſt from his pretenſions, if he could not produce the proofs required. D'Aubigné having recovered his parchments in the caſtle of Archiac, he gave in the writings they demanded. They were carefully examined by four gentlemen, who pronouced d'Aubigné to be deſcended from the antient family of d'Aubigny in Anjou, and he was married to his miſtreſs, according to the articles. *

D'Aubigné, by the marriage contract, was obliged to purchaſe an eſtate in Poitou: that of Chaillou lay convenient for him, and he bought it. Catherine de Medicis had inſiſted upon preventing three things from ſucceeding in Poitou, and theſe were, the marriage of the prince of Conde with Mademoiſelle de la Trimouille on account of Taillebourg, that of d'Aubigné on account of Murçay, and that of La Perſonne on account of Denault: notwithſtanding which theſe three marriages were ſolemnized.

CHAP-

* In the contract of marriage dated June 6, 1583, executed before Vaſſe a notary, d'Aubigné takes the titles of Squire, Lord of Landes, Guillemer and Chaillou, Equery to the king of Navarre, and Gentleman in ordinary of his chamber; and Suſannah de Lezey is ſtyled Daughter of the noble and puiſſant Lord Ambroſe de Lezey, and of the Lady Renée de Vivonne. The houſe of Lezey is a branch of that of Luſignan.

CHAPTER VIII.

D'Aubigne's *advice to the king of Navarre.*

THE queen of Navarre having returned to Paris with the queen her mother, Henry III. received her with great coldneſs: ſhe, in revenge, joined thoſe who defamed her brother by ſatirical verſes on his extravagant fondneſs for his minions. Henry III. affronted her publickly, and ſhe complained of it to her huſband. The king of Navarre expected, that a woman, to whom he ſhewed nothing but contempt, ſhould be treated with reſpect by the court of France. He aſſembled his council, and it was there propoſed, to demand reparation of the king of France for theſe inſults to the queen of Navarre. All the miniſters approved of this reſolution, but none were willing to undertake the commiſſion. D'Aubigné was more bold. He went to Henry III, who was then at Saint-Germain: he complained with haughtineſs, they endeavoured to intimidate him: he deſpiſed their threats, and upon their refuſing to make an immediate reparation, he gave into the hands of the king of France a declaration, by which the king of Navarre renounced his friendſhip and alliance. To this Henry III. replied: 'Go, return to the king your maſter, ſince you 'dare call him ſo, and tell him that I will lay a bur-'den upon his ſhoulders, too heavy even for the 'Grand-Signior to bear.

'Sire, replied d'Aubigné, my maſter has been 'brought up under that very burden with which you 'threaten him. If you will give him juſtice, he will do 'homage to you with his life, his fortunes and his ſer-'vants: but he will not yield his honour to you, or 'any prince living, while he can graſp an inch of 'ſword in his fingers.'

The queen mother, to ſoften d'Aubigné, told him that the Officer and the guards, who had affronted her daughter, ſhould be put to death. 'They do not ſa-

'crifice

'crifice hogs to Diana, replied d'Aubigné; ſhe re-'quires nobler victims.' *

1585.] Some years afterwards, the duke of Epernon made propoſals to the king of Navarre, for an accommodation between him and the king of France, his brother-in-law. Ségur, who was at the head of his council, oppoſed it vigorouſly at the inſtigation of d'Aubigné. The counteſs of Guiche, then favourite miſtreſs, was reconciled to Ségur, and d'Aubigné was ſacrificed. Ségur accuſed him of having uttered ſome free ſpeeches againſt the king with which he was greatly offended. D'Aubigné, returning from Poitou, was informed on the road, that Henry had promiſed the counteſs of Guiche to ſend him to the Baſtille: his friends earneſtly intreated him to turn back: he left his equipage, took poſt, put a poignard in his girdle, went to court, and by a private ſtair-caſe, entered the king's cloſet, whom he found *tete à tete* with his miſtreſs, 'Be not ſurprized, Sire, (ſaid he to Henry) I am come 'to know what crime I have committed, and whether 'you have reſolved to reward my ſervices like a good 'and juſt prince, or like a real tyrant?' 'You well 'know, replied the king, that I love you: but Ségur is 'enraged againſt you; reconcile yourſelf to him.' D'Aubigné went to him, and terrified him ſo much by his reproaches and threats, that he ran to the king, and ſaid: 'Sire, your equery is a better man than either you or I.'

The treaties were violated, they took arms again, and the league was completely formed. Henry deliberated, whether the Proteſtants ſhould unite with the king of France to oppoſe it. The greateſt number of his courtiers were for an abſolute union: but d'Aubigné delivered his opinion in theſe terms: 'The reſpect I 'owe to thoſe who have ſpoke before me, would keep 'me

* This recital is taken from the Hiſt. univerſelle of d'Aubigné: but it is not eaſy to make it agree with that of Du Pleſſis Mornay, who in his Memoirs ſays, that he only was charged with this negociation, which he relates at length. See Bayle's diſſertation upon this in his Anſwers to the queſtions of a Provincial.

'me ſilent, were the ſubject now diſcuſſed, of leſs im-
'portance. The affair is not one of ceremony, but
'of fidelity, The oath I have made to God, to his
'cauſe, and to you, Sire, obliges me to ſpeak freely,
'and without diſguiſe. I declare then, that it is to
'trample under our feet the aſhes of our martyrs, to
'ſhed the blood of our heroes, to erect gibbets over
'the tombs of our princes and generals, and to con-
'demn to equal ignominy thoſe that ſtill remain, who
'have vowed to loſe their lives in defence of their re-
'ligion, to make it here doubtful, whether we have
'a right to take arms? This aſſembly, if it is not
'lawful, is guilty of high-treaſon. We can no long-
'er look back upon the paſt: all that is permitted us,
'is, to examine what we ought now to do. If you
'take arms, the king of France will fear you it is true:
'if he fears you, he will hate you. Ah, would to
'God, that hatred was now to begin! If he hates
'you, he will deſtroy you; this is what is now ſaid,
'and this is the language of cowardice. Are we alone
'to remain inactive while all France is in arms?
'Ought we to permit our ſoldiers to ſwear obedience
'to generals, who have vowed to extirpate us? What
'will be the conſequence of uniting our Troops, but
'the corruption of our ſoldiers, by allowing them to
'march under other colours? Let us take a ſlight
'view of the ſoldiers in each party. There they fight
'for pay; here honour is their reward. There they
'are delivered up to licentiouſneſs; here they are ſub-
'jected to a rigid diſcipline. Shall we ſhew our young
'nobility, that we are baſe, and that our enemies alone
'have honour? Let us ſuppoſe that we are equal;
'what then will become of the princes of the blood,
'and the great lords of the party, when they have
'given the new ſoldiers a teſtimony of their valour?
'Shall they lay the grandeur, they were born to in
'the duſt, and ſhall they who were made to command,
'diſcover an eagerneſs to obey? We muſt ſhew our
'ſubmiſſion, it is ſaid: let us ſhew it then, but with-
'out meanneſs; let us ſerve the king, but not by be-
'coming incapable of ſerving ourſelves. Will our

'ſoldiers

'ſoldiers fight courageouſly, when they behold themſelves mingled with thoſe whoſe treachery they have ſo much reaſon to fear? Let us fix the tottering throne: let us die for the prince who has oppreſt us; but let us not unite our forces with his. If we muſt kneel before him, let it be in ſteel; and when we give him our oath, draw our hand from the gauntlet. Let us lay our conqueſts, not our fears, at his feet. Under what pretence do our enemies take arms againſt their king? but to ruin us. Since the ſcepter cannot reſtrain them in their duty, our ſwords muſt put a ſtop to their rebellion. Let us deprive the leaguers of the advantage of that ſubmiſſion, we are deſirous of rendering the king of France, and fight ſeparately. If we remain idle, the king will deſpiſe us: if he unites with our enemies, he will ruin us without ſtriking a blow: but if we take arms, we ſhall force his eſteem. He will be glad of us as allies, and under his auſpices we ſhall ſubdue our common enemies.'

Theſe arguments, ſtrengthened by ſome examples, quoted by Mornay, and ſupported by the prince of Conde, were approved by the whole council, and d'Aubigné's advice was followed.

1587.] The war was now begun. D'Aubigné was preſent in every action: he defended Poitou, paſſed for dead three weeks at the enterprize of Angers; ſeized the iſle of Oleron, maintained himſelf there by a thouſand dangerous ſkirmiſhes, to which he always ran with the utmoſt ardour, obtained the government of it, was taken in a deſcent made by the inhabitants of Brouage, and releaſed upon his parole.

The king of Navarre ſold Oleron to the Catholicks. D'Aubigné, ſeeing his conqueſt ſnatched out of his hands, retired to his own houſe, bid an eternal adieu to his maſter, but ſought to finiſh his career by ſome ſtriking action.

He became weary of a religion which he had ſo well defended, and which had recompenced him ſo ill. In theſe moments of diſcontent, he ſuffered ſome ſigns of his diſguſt to the proteſtant faith to eſcape him.

His

His friends preſt him to ſend for ſome controverſial writings: he read them eagerly, in hopes to find a poſſibility of ſalvation in that religion which excluded all others from it. He turned over Panigarole, but rejected him as a boaſter: he admired the eloquence of Campion, but on the title-page wrote the *ten declamations* inſtead of the *ten arguments*. He was ſenſible of the ſtrength, the method, the candour of Bellarmin: but upon examining his proofs, he found them ſo weak, that Bellarmin confirmed him in the reformed religion.*

He had retired from court, but ſix months, when the affairs of the Proteſtants were brought to the moſt dreadful extremity. Henry ſought a reconciliation with d'Aubigné, and to calm his reſentment, offered to deliver one of his natural ſons into his hands as a pledge of his friendſhip. D'Aubigné would not accept of this mark of confidence, fearing that he ſhould be accuſed of having purchaſed this retutn of favour by ſome unworthy condeſcenſion; but he attended the king, went with him to reconnoitre Talmont, and forced him to acknowledge that the uſe of pikes was very advantageous to the infantry, marked the place of action at the battle of Coutras, and ſerved there in the quality of camp-marſhal.

Henry walking one day with him and the viſcount de Turenne, diſcloſed to them all the perplexity and uneaſineſs which his paſſion, for the counteſs of Guiche gave him, the deſign he had entertained to marry her, and the promiſe he had given her to that purpoſe, commanding them to attend him the next day and give him their advice. Turenne, who had paſt the whole night in reflexions upon the taſk that was aſſigned him, reſolved not to enter into ſo delicate an affair, and contrived to make an immediate journey to Marant abſolutely neceſſary. D'Aubigné, whoſe employment about the king took away all pretence for abſence, determined to do his duty.

The

* Secret Memoirs of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné.

The king went out of the town early in the morning, and ordering his train to keep at a diſtance, called d'Aubigné to him, and entered into a diſcourſe that laſted two hours, in which he quoted the examples of thirty princes ancient and modern, who, by marrying their ſubjects, had compleated their happineſs; and mentioned thirty others whoſe fondneſs for great alliances had rendered either miſerable in their private life, inſecure upon the throne, or contemptible to their people: he concluded with blaming the extreme injuſtice of thoſe perſons who, being without paſſions themſelves, expected to regulate, by the dictates of an auſtere and inflexible philoſophy, all the actions of a man in love. 'In fine, added he, it is now 'neceſſary that you ſhould tell me your opinion more 'freely, according to the maxims of that harſh pro-'bity which I have ſometimes hated, but which I now 'no longer dread.' D'Aubigné who had been meditating on this ſubject the whole night, was overjoyed that the king had commanded him to deliver his ſentiments with that freedom that was ſo natural to him.

He began his anſwer by exclaiming againſt thoſe baſe flatterers who, in the ſeduction of princes, make uſe of hiſtory, which alone can be the teſt of their conduct. He proved, 'that theſe paraſites contracted 'the guilt of giving deliberately ſuch councils as paſ-'ſion can only excuſe. Theſe examples, added he, 'are very fine, very ſtriking, but, Sire, they ought 'not to be imitated by you. The princes you have 'mentioned were ſecurely fixed on the throne. You 'have only claims and hopes; they lived in the 'ſecurity of peace, you in the viciſſitudes of war: 'they had not even enemies, you are ſurrounded with 'traitors; they were poſſeſſed of power, you have 'nothing but virtue: they, by great exploits, acqui-'red the privileges of doing extraordinary things, but 'you ſee all your valour has not yet procured you in-'dulgence for ſuch as are very common and even law-'ful. It is doubtleſs of little conſequence to a ſtate, 'whether a prince marries his equal or his ſubject, 'but general prejudice is againſt you: deſpiſe it in

‘ private, in publick ſeem to reſpect it. Why are
‘ you a king, but to make a continual ſacrifice of
‘ your paſſions to the publick quiet and apparent de-
‘ cency? The grand Signior, you ſay, has married
‘ his ſlave: but is it over Muſſulmen you are to reign?
‘ how will the proteſtants, Paris, the league, exclaim,
‘ to find you introducing into France the manners and
‘ cuſtoms of Turky? In you, Sire, I conſider four
‘ ſeveral perſons; Henry of Bourbon, the king of Na-
‘ varre, the preſumptive heir to the crown of France,
‘ and the protector of the reformed churches. In each
‘ of theſe characters you are ſerved by men who have
‘ different intereſts, and who muſt be differently re-
‘ warded. To thoſe who ſerve Henry of Bourbon you
‘ confide the care of your perſon and family; to the
‘ ſubjects of the king of Navarre, the poſts and em-
‘ ployments of your ſovereignty; to the partiſans of
‘ the heir to the throne of France, the eminent digni-
‘ ties to which they aſpire. But how will you recom-
‘ pence thoſe who look upon you as the protector of
‘ their religion? they require of you a warm zeal for
‘ God, an irreproachable life and great examples; and
‘ they have a right to require them: for if you are
‘ their ſuperior by titles, in other reſpects they are
‘ your companions, and companions who leave you all
‘ the honour and all the advantage of war, and to
‘ themſelves reſerve only the dangers of it. What in-
‘ dignation will all France be filled with, ſhould
‘ France behold only a woman's ſlave in the man, who,
‘ to be worthy of reigning there, ought to begin by
‘ reigning over himſelf! Why ſhould I diſſemble with
‘ you? you have your fortune to make, it depends
‘ upon the conſtant affection of thoſe who are attached
‘ to you, either by the ties of friendſhip, the allure-
‘ ments of hope, or the dictates of duty: do not,
‘ Sire, diſſolve the ties yourſelf, by alienating all their
‘ hearts. You love, my prince, I have been too ten-
‘ der a lover to oppoſe your paſſion, love ſtill, but to
‘ be happy, render yourſelf worthy of your miſtreſs.
‘ Purchaſe, by labours, by ſucceſs, by glory, and the
‘ deſtruction of your enemies, the right of uniting

‘ your-

'yourſelf to her without a bluſh, and without fear. 'Let this very paſſion quicken your pace on the road 'to honour: apply yourſelf to your affairs, in that 'application conſiſts your ſafety: king of France, or 'nothing: give hours to buſineſs, to pleaſure mo-'ments; ſeek again the friendſhip of thoſe proteſtants, 'whoſe auſtere countenances you dread; repreſs thoſe 'emotions of anger which diſturb your domeſtick 'quiet; and endeavour to gain the hearts of the 'French; put your life and your grandeur in ſecurity, 'then you may imitate thoſe princes whoſe examples 'have been quoted to you, for I cannot perſuade my-'ſelf, Sire, that you, who have ſuch a diſlike to read-'ing, ſhould have taken the trouble yourſelf to ſearch 'in the annals of the world for authorities to juſtify 'this marriage in itſelf ſo indifferent, but in the pre-'ſent conjuncture ſo extremely ill-timed. Monſieur 'd'Alençon is dead, you have but one ſtep more to 'the throne of France, to marry your miſtreſs now is 'to fall from it for ever. The king thanked d'Au-bigné for his advice, and aſſured him, that for two years to come, he would not marry the counteſs of Guiche.

D'Aubigné, being now in greater favour than ever with Henry, lay always in his chamber; one morning he ſaid to La Force, who was in the ſame bed with him, 'La Force, our maſter is the moſt ungrateful 'mortal in the world.' La Force, half aſleep, aſked 'him what he ſaid. 'How deaf are you, cried 'the king, he tells you that I am the moſt ungrateful 'of men.' 'Sleep, ſleep, Sire, ſaid Aubigné, we 'have a great deal worſe to ſay of you.' The king, ſays the hiſtorian, did not look with greater coldneſs on me for this freedom the next day, but he gave me not a ſol the more.

This prince was obliged to purchaſe the Leaguers at too high a price, to be able to beſtow any thing on his friends, but the proteſtants ſerved him with ſo much zeal and affection, that after having lived upon their equipages for ſome time, the promiſe of a battle pre-

vailed with them to ſell their eſtates. To fight again was all the reward of victory.

CHAPTER IX.

D'AUBIGNE' *retires.*

D'AUBIGNE' poſſeſſed of full power in Poitou, commanded there a large body of the Army, and held correſpondencies in all the towns. He made himſelf maſter of Niort, led the forlorn hope to the ſiege of Eſtampes, and attended Henry IV. in his viſit to the king of France after he had been ſtab'd by a monk, and ſtaid in the chamber till that prince expired. He took Maillezais: *and Maillezais remained with its conqueror.** The government of that place was given to him, and he retired thither with little money, philoſophy enough, and great glory. His whole time, from the fifteenth year of his age, had been paſt in battles and dangerous enterpriſes, except thoſe intervals when he was employed in the cure of his wounds.

He refuſed to follow Henry to the ſiege of Paris, but that did not prevent the cardinal of Bourbon, acknowledged king of France by the league, from being truſted to his care. This prince was brought away from Chinon where he was guarded by Chavigny, and conducted with great ſecreſy to Maillezais. In vain Du Pleſſis Mornay oppoſed his removal thither, on account of the diſguſt d'Aubigné had received from the court. The king replied, that the word of d'Aubigné, tho' in diſcontent, was as good a ſecurity as the gratitude of any other.

1590.] The dutcheſs of Retz endeavoured to corrupt his fidelity: ſhe ſent an Italian gentleman to him with the following letter:

'Couſin,

'The marſhal of Retz, my huſband, and myſelf, 'entreat you to accept the tokens we offer you, of our 'real

* D'Aubigné Hiſtoire univerſelle.

'real friendſhip and ſollicitude for the advancement of 'your fortune, and the happineſs of our couſins, your 'children: begin from this day to ſhew that you are 'ſenſible of injuries: the gentleman we have ſent to 'you will tell you the reſt.'

The meſſenger declared his commiſſion, and offered d'Aubigné two hundred thouſand crowns in ready money, or the government of Belle-Iſle, with fifty thouſand, if he would ſuffer his priſoner to make his eſcape. Belle-Iſle, ſaid Aubigné, would afford me more ſecurity than Maillezais in the enjoyment of what I ſhould purchaſe by my treaſon; but conſcience which follows me every where, will intrude upon me in that aſylum: go then and be aſſured that if you had not ſurpriſed me into the grant of a ſafe conduct, I would ſend you bound hand and foot to the king my maſter.

The count of Briſſac made ſeveral attempts upon Maillezais, to deliver from thence the cardinal king. D'Aubigné provided for every exigence, ſuſtained all his efforts, and by his vigilance and activity, did all that the ſtrongeſt garriſon could have done.

The king who had for ſome months been treating with Rome, and the League, concerning his religion, at length abjured proteſtantiſm. D'Aubigné neglected no expedient to retrieve the affairs of the party; he was poſſeſſed of the entire confidence of the churches, and he ſtrenuouſly ſupported their intereſts in that famous aſſembly of the proteſtants, in which, after two years ſpent in demands and conteſts, they obtained the edict of Nantes, that maſter-ſtroke of the ableſt heads of the ſtate, negociating ſo long, ſo long diſcuſſed, freely granted by a wiſe, grateful, and peaceful king, to a people numerous, faithful, and diſarmed, who had ſeated him upon the throne.

At Vendôme, at Saumur, at Loudun, and Chaſtellerault, d'Aubigné was the man whom the party ſingled out to oppoſe the deputies from the court in all the deliberations concerning the affairs of the proteſtants. De Freſne Canaye, preſident of the chamber

mi-partie of * Caſtres, having endeavoured to leſſen the ſervices and the forces of the proteſtants; d'Aubigné obſerving the chief men in the aſſembly beginning to yield, animated them anew by a ſpeech delivered with great vehemence. 'Is it thus, ſaid the preſident, that the intereſts of the ſtate are diſcuſſed? and who are you, replied d'Aubigné! who pretend to teach us what the king's intereſt requires of us? we knew it before you begun to learn it. Would you advance your fortune by oppoſing the king's ſervice to that of God? learn to be ſilent when it is fit you ſhould be ſo, and do not interrupt thoſe who have deliberate voices in this aſſembly.' 'Where are we?' exclaimed de Freſne, looking about him, and trembling with rage. 'Where mice gnaw iron,' replied d'Aubigné calmly. Theſe words inſpired the aſſembly with new courage. The preſident did not fail to do his enemy bad offices with the king. The duke of Bouillon declared, that ſuch a migiſtrate ought to be revered: 'Yes, anſwered d'Aubigné,' who will apoſtatize in three months.' Three months afterwards the venerable magiſtrate became a catholick.

D'Aubigné was ſoon weary of his retirement; he went to the ſiege of Rouen when the duke of Parma came to the aſſiſtance of the beſieged, and commanded there in the quality of lieutenant general.

His wife died, and he ſought conſolation only in new dangers. His enemies attributed the great actions they ſaw him perform, to his deſpair at having loſt Henry's favour, ſince his acceſſion to the throne of France. D'Aubigné, to remove this ſuſpicion, appeared again at court.

When he arrived at Chaulny, he went to the houſe of the fair Gabriella, then dutcheſs of Beaufort, the king being expected there. Two of the courtiers, who were his friends, earneſtly entreated him to mount his horſe again, and not to preſent himſelf to the king, who was greatly offended with him. The officers of the

* *Mi-partie* means a chamber, of which half the judges were proteſtants, and half roman catholicks.

the houſe deliberated whether ſhe ſhould not deliver him into the cuſtody of the captain of the guards, or into that of the prevôt de l'hôtel. D'Aubigné, ſecure of his maſter's affection, took his ſtand amongſt the flambeaux that attended the king. As the coach paſſed before the ſteps of the houſe he heard Henry ſay, '*there is monſeigneur d'Aubigné.*' Notwithſtanding this mock reſpect he advanced: the king held out his hand to him, commanded him to help his miſtreſs out of the coach, and then made her unmaſk to ſalute him The courtiers aſked him, ſmiling, if the fair Gabriella, when ſhe embraced him, performed the office of the prevôt de l'hôtel. The king ordered all his attendants to withdraw, and remained ſhut up two hours, with only his miſtreſs and d'Aubigné. It was during this converſation that he made uſe of that ſaying which ran over all the kingdom, and which the proteſtants have ſince conſidered as a prophecy. The king ſhewing him his lip which had been wounded by a knife. 'Sire, ſaid d'Aubigné to him, 'you have yet renounced God only with your lips, and he is ſatisfied 'with piercing your lips, but if it ſhould ever happen that you renounce him with your heart, he 'will then pierce your heart.' 'Oh! cried Gabriella, this is a fine ſpeech but unſeaſonable.' 'Yes, 'Madam, replied d'Aubigné, becauſe it is as uſeleſs 'as it is true.'

The dutcheſs of Beaufort was charmed with his noble frankneſs, ſhe was deſirous of attaching d'Aubigné to herſelf, and the king fixed him in his ſervice, by acquainting him with his great deſigns, in favour of the little Cæſar, afterwards duke of Vendôme, he cauſed the child to be brought naked to him, and gave him himſelf to the care of d'Aubigné; ordering him to carry him at three years of age to Saintonge, there to be educated among the proteſtants, in order to render him more favourable to the party: a deſign which confirms this teſtimony of the hiſtorians, who attribute theſe words to Henry. 'If the Huguenots have no nobility among them, 'we muſt ſend them ſome.'

1595.] This prince quitted the boſom of the proteſtants, who acknowledged him for king, without any condition, only through condeſcenſion to the Leaguers, who maintained, that his being an heretick, made it lawful to exclude him from the throne: yet he had not always that indifference about religion, which made him ſay that a crown was worth a maſs. A ſevere fit of illneſs brought him back to his former opinions; he cauſed d'Aubigné to be called to him, and retiring with him to his cloſet, he kneeled and prayed to God, and then ordered d'Aubigné to tell him freely whether he thought he had ever committed the ſin againſt the Holy-Ghoſt. D'Aubigné, after having in vain exhorted him, to let a miniſter examine this queſtion, entered into a diſcuſſion of the four qualities of this ſin, namely, the commiſſion of it knowingly, reſiſting the ſpirit of truth, impenitence and deſpair. The new caſuiſt referred the king to an examination of his own conſcience, upon theſe four points. This converſation was ſix times interrupted by fervent prayers. The next day the king was better, and he would hear no more concerning the ſin againſt the Holy-Ghoſt.

After the conference at Fontainbleau, in which Henry ſeemed to enjoy the cruel pleaſure of ſeeing the faithful Mornay humbled by cardinal Perron, d'Aubigné attempted to reſtore the diminiſhed glory of his party, by a ſecond conference with that prelate. He diſputed with him, during five hours, in the preſence of the king, and more than four hundred other perſons. This theological battle, in which both the diſputants claimed the victory, was concluded by a treatiſe which d'Aubigné compoſed *de diſſidiis patrum*. The biſhop of Evreux made no anſwer to it, although the king promiſed d'Aubigné that it ſhould be anſwered.

D'Aubigné was obſerved to be cloſely connected with the dukes of Tremouille and Bouillon, and this embroiled him again with the court. Bouillon was become formidable to the ſtate, he was accuſed of having laid a ſcheme to form the proteſtant party into a kind of republick throughout France. He talked in the language of one who accuſes and threatens, rather

rather than of a perſon accuſed and humbled. The duke of Tremouille was ſuſpected of having engaged in his deſigns; he had refuſed all the offers made him by de Thou, and the duke of Sully, and ſupported the intereſts of the proteſtant party, with a firmneſs and zeal which the court greatly diſapproved: They thought his ſchemes were thoſe of a chief of the proteſtants, becauſe he had the virtues of one; and yet it was certain that he often ſaid, 'let them ſign the 'edict of Nants, give liberty to the conſciences of my 'brethern, and ſecurity to their lives; and when that 'is done, they may hang me up at the door of the 'church, no perſon will ſtir on that account.'

However the king ſent troops to inveſt him in Tours; the duke of Tremouille wrote to d'Aubigné in this manner: 'my friend, I earneſtly intreat you to 'fulfil the oaths you have made, and come and die 'with your affectionate ſervant.' D'Aubigné's anſwer ran thus; 'monſieur, your letter ſhall be obeyed: 'but there is one thing in it which I muſt find fault 'with, it is your reminding me of my oaths; ſurely 'they ought to be held too ſacred and inviolable to 'make it be thought barely poſſible, that I ſhould ne'glect to perform them.' D'Aubigné came to Tours with his friends, and the duke of Tremouille fortified himſelf there: they often made ſallies into the fields, and rendered themſelves formidable to the king's troops. One day as they were croſſing a village they ſaw the heads of ſome aſſaſſins upon the wheel; d'Aubigné perceived the duke of Tremouille to turn pale at that ſpectacle. 'Let us calmly contemplate 'theſe tragick objects, ſaid d'Aubigné, in the circum'ſtances we are, it is right to familiarize ourſelves 'with death.'

The duke of Tremouille concluded a peace; d'Aubigné preſided with the duke of Sully, at the general aſſembly of proteſtants, which was held at Châtelleraut: and compoſed the differences which had riſen between the churches of Languedoc and Dauphiné.

The duke of Tremouille died in diſgrace with his king; and d'Aubigné ſeeing no Huguenots in Poictou,

but ſuch as had already ſold themſelves to the court, or ſought to do it, he thought that an honeſt man could not live in ſafety among ſo many heretics. He was juſt going to embark, with an intention to quit the kingdom for ever, when he received letters from La Varenne, Bouillon, and even from the king, in which he was earneſtly entreated to come to court. Henry employed him in preparations for the juſts and tournaments, but being alone with him one day in a wood, he thus ſpoke to him: 'I have not yet mentioned 'your aſſemblies to you, you have ruined every thing 'by pretending to ſerve me againſt my will: all the 'deputies were my penſioners, a ſpy of the higheſt 'quality coſt me only five hundred crowns. How 'often have I ſaid,

'*Oh! if my people had heard my voice, I might, in 'one moment, have vanquiſhed and deſtroyed.*

'Sire, replied d'Aubigné, I have been deputed to 'you by the churches, contrary to my inclinations, 'but I thought it incumbent upon me to repair, by 'my zeal, in their cauſe, the misfortune they have 'ſuffered in loſing the protection of a king, who, 'without them, would have been only a private gen-'tleman. When I look upon you, Sire, I reſume 'my former plainneſs of ſpeech. Tell me then, I 'conjure you, why you have been offended with me. 'You have loved Tremouille too well, anſwered Hen-'ry, I hated him, you knew it, yet you declared 'yourſelf for him. Sire, ſaid d'Aubigné, I have been 'brought up at the feet of your majeſty, and early 'learned to reſpect the unfortunate, and not to aban-'don friends who were oppreſt by ſuperior power. 'Do not blame that virtue in me which I acquired by 'the apprenticeſhip I ſerved under you.'

CHAPTER X.

The ſchemes of D'AUBIGNE'.

WHILE France enjoyed the ſweets of a pro-found peace, d'Aubigné conſecrated his leiſure to

to the hiſtory of his own times. He ſent in to all parts to procure memoirs from: republicks he deſired them openly; and ſolicited all his friends to procure him ſuch as lay hid in the cabinets of kings: he allured and invited all; the greater part believed that praiſe ought to ſeek them in their receſſes, and ſome neglected to inform the hiſtorian of the actions of their anceſtors, as if the glory of the fathers was a reproach to the ſons.

The jeſuits took the alarm at this work; they prevailed upon Henry to forbid d'Aubigné from making any farther progreſs in it. Cardinal du Perron remonſtrated to the king, that no perſon was more proper for compleating ſuch a plan than d'Aubigné; that the hiſtory of a hero ought only to be writ by a ſoldier; and that the deſcription of battles could not be drawn by a better hand, than that which had ſo great a ſhare in victories. The king approved of what the cardinal ſaid, commanded d'Aubigné to go on with his work, and even promiſed him a conſiderable ſum of money, to enable him to draw plans and procure materials for it. This promiſe was never fulfilled, and d'Aubigné compleated that great work at the expence of his purſe, his quiet, and his health.

More agreeable ſtudies ſoftened, by intervals, the fatigue of a work ſo laborious; he made verſes, and in his elegies, which he called his *tragiques*, he gave vent to his ſecret diſguſts and reſentment: from theſe he returned to gentler * muſes, and often quitted them to retouch the catholick confeſſion of Sancy, which he began in the year 1595, at the time that Henry left him in his poverty, his ſervices unrewarded, his talents unemployed, to beſtow all his favour upon Sancy, whoſe whole merit conſiſted in adopting the ſervile obedience of Mercury to the paſſions of Jupiter, and who had changed his religion, as often as that change appeared neceſſary for the advancement of his fortune. This ſatire is a maſter-piece of wit, fine, delicate, full of apt alluſions,

* See the collection of Miſcellanies of M. d'Aubigné, printed at Geneva 1630.

alluſions, full of ſpirit. The greateſt genius of this age would not diſavow it.

At Paris nothing was talked of but an agreement between the two religions, which by weak minds, was thought poſſible, by gentle ones deſired, and by warm and obſtinate ones prevented. The court gained over many of the proteſtant miniſters. D'Aubigné made himſelf ſure of Charanton, who promiſed to ſupport him in the offer he propoſed to make, of reducing all the controverted points in the two religions, to the rules obſerved in the firſt ages of the church. The king commanded him to confer on this ſubject with cardinal du Perron, the moſt ardent, and moſt incredulous of converters *. After many long converſations upon the neceſſity of finding a medium, which might terminate the diviſions that tore chriſtianity to pieces, D'Aubigné ſaid to him, that 'Societies, when they fell to decay, had no means of re-eſtabliſhing themſelves, but by returning to their firſt laws. Let each party, added he, receive the tenets of the four firſt ages as fundamental laws. You who call yourſelves the eldeſt, ſhall begin by proving the firſt title which we ſhall demand of you: we will give you up the ſecond, and go on in this manner, till religion is quite ſettled.' The cardinal ſaid that the proteſtant clergy would diſavow theſe propoſals. D'Aubigné aſſured him that they had already accepted them. Du Perron ſqueezing his hand, replied 'give us forty years more. You would have the council of Calcedon, replied d'Aubigné, I grant it you. 'You muſt be obliged, reſumed du Perron, to conſent to the elevation of the croſs, received without oppo-

* After having proved to Henry III. that there was a God, he offered to prove ſtill clearer that there was none. See journal of Henry III. He was the ſon of a miniſter of Rouen called James Davy, and afterwards du Perron, from the name of a ſtreet in Geneva where he lodged. The name converter was invented by d'Aubigné, who was the firſt that gave it to the cardinal.

'oppoſition, in the fifth age. Yes, anſwered d'Au-
'bigné, for the ſake of peace we will, but will you
'conſent to reduce the authority of the popes to the
'bounds which were preſcribed to it in the year 400?
'We will, in compaſſion, give you two hundred
'years.' The cardinal who had been perſecuted at Rome by the inquiſition, and who, in his embaſſy, had received ſome diſguſt, declared that if they would not terminate the affair at Rome, it ſhould be concluded at Paris.

D'Aubigné, after this conference, went to the king who expected him in his cloſet, and gave him an account of what had paſſed. The king aſked him, why he did not give up the council of Calcedon to the cardinal without any condition. 'Sire, replied d'Au-
'bigné, if the Roman church ſhould demand fifty
'years more than the four hundred, this would be a
'tacit confeſſion that the four firſt ages were not for
'her.' This anſwer occaſioned murmurs among ſome jeſuits and biſhops who were preſent; and the count of Soiſſons ſaid aloud, that ſuch ſpeeches were injurious to the king: one may eaſily imagine, that they were far from agreeing with regard to tenets, when they were ſo nice, or ſo unjuſt, with regard to expreſſions.

Henry had ſo great a dependance upon the abilities of d'Aubigné, that he appointed him ambaſſador extraordinary to Germany, with orders to the other envoys, to give him once in three months an account of their negotiations. But he altered this reſolution, when he had formed thoſe great deſigns, which the duke of Sully has preſerved to us, which he confided to d'Aubigné, and which we now treat as chimeras.

1610.] D'Aubigné being vice-admiral of the coaſts of Poictou and Saintonge, he ſolicited the king to turn his arms firſt againſt Spain. Henry rejected this propoſal, quoting to him the old proverb: 'Who
'goes weak into Spain, is beat; who goes there ſtrong,
'dies of hunger.' D'Aubigné engaged to fit out a ſmall number of men of war, which ſhould ſupply the French army with proviſions in Spain, and went to Saintonge

Saintonge to perform his promiſe. Henry, at taking leave of him, ſpoke theſe remarkable words: 'D'Aubigné, deceive yourſelf no longer. I hold my ſpiritual and temporal life to be in the hands of the pope, whom I acknowledge to be the true vicar of God.' 'Your great deſigns then, replied d'Aubigné, will vaniſh into ſmoke, and your life is in danger, ſince you truſt for its preſervation to a mortal like yourſelf.' Some months after the dreadful news was brought him, that the king was dead, having been ſtabbed by Ravaillac; they aſſured him, that the ſtroke had been given him in the throat; d'Aubigné ſaid inſtantly, in the preſence of ſeveral perſons, that it was in his heart, and he was ſure of it. No other victim was ſacrificed to the manes of this great king but the villain that aſſaſſinated him. The death of Henry III. had likewiſe been left unrevenged.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the rebellion of D'AUBIGNÉ. *His dumb man and the ſale of Maillezais.*

THE queen being declared regent by the parliament of Paris, ſhe was acknowledged as ſuch by all the Proteſtants. D'Aubigné alone maintained, that this election belonged to the general ſtates of the kingdom: as if the ſtates had a right to ſummon themſelves, and were not occaſionally repreſented by the court of peers. He was nevertheleſs deputed by his province, to aſſure the queen of the moſt perfect ſubmiſſion to her authority as regent, the lawfulneſs of which they ſtill doubted. The council was extremely offended that none of the proteſtant deputies addreſſed the queen kneeling. Villeroi complained of it to d'Aubigné. 'Gentlemen, replied d'Aubigné, owe reverence to kings; but it is to God only that they ought to bend their knees.'

The

The queen took it into her head to have a private conference with him; the pretence for it was to draw intelligence from him concerning a certain ſecret affair; but the real motive to render him unfaithful, or ſuſpected to his party.

At the opening of the great aſſembly of Saumur, Boiſſieres the king's commiſſioner endeavoured to attach him to the court. 'I ſhall obtain of the queen, 'ſaid d'Aubigné, all I wiſh, and that is her eſteem.' La Varenne in vain tempted his fidelity. One of the deputies, who had been corrupted, ſaid to him, 'What was it that brought La Varenne to your 'houſe yeſterday? You have had a dozen conferences 'with him.' What, replied d'Aubigné, he did at 'your houſe in the firſt, and which he could not at 'mine in the twelfth.'

In this aſſembly he had an irreconcileable quarrel with the duke of Bouillon, whom he hindred from preſiding at it, and contradicted him on every point. The duke having in a pathetic ſpeech endeavoured to perſuade the Proteſtants to reſign their cautionary towns, and throw themſelves entirely upon the diſcretion of the queen and the council, beſtowed great praiſes on them for the glory they had acquired by expoſing themſelves to ſuffer martyrdom itſelf. 'Yes, 'Monſieur, ſaid d'Aubigné, they are happy who ſuffer 'for Jeſus Chriſt. It is the Character of a true Chri'ſtian to expoſe himſelf to ſuffer martyrdom for the 'intereſt of his religion; but to expoſe his brethren 'to it, is the character of a traitor and an executioner.'

The great lords and miniſters among the Proteſtants, who had been gained by the court, betrayed the intereſts of their party. D'Aubigné took leave of the aſſembly under pretence of his advanced age, but in reality through ſhame and grief at ſeeing ſo much corruption and timidity among thoſe very Huguenots whom once he had known to be diſintereſted and firm. The duke of Rohan, hated by the queen-regent, becauſe he could not be corrupted, retired to St. Jean d'Angely, and there fortified himſelf. D'Aubigné, to whom they no longer allowed the funds neceſſary for

the

the maintainance of his garriſon in Maillezais, and whoſe penſion of ſeven thouſand livres was ſtopped, becauſe he would not accept one of twelve hundred thouſand, which was offered him by the queen, was obliged to indemnify himſelf for theſe loſſes upon the river of Sevre. The court threatened him with a ſiege, and that he might be the better enabled to ſupport it, he purchaſed the little iſle of Doignon, which he put in a condition of defence. The prince of Conde was in motion: the dukes of Bouillon and Rohan, who joined him, ſent to require d'Aubigné to declare his ſentiments: he explained them in theſe terms: 'I will 'bear on my own ſhoulders the burden of your war, 'but you muſt indemnify me for that of your peace.'

This war, tho' projected, went no farther: a ſtop was put to it by an amneſty, from which none but d'Aubigné was excluded. He therefore fortified Maillezais, and raiſed new works at Doignon. Theſe precautions increaſed his ſecurity, and gave him importance. The prince of Conde again took arms, and ſent d'Aubigné a general's commiſſion. D'Aubigné would not accept of this employment, unleſs he was appointed to it by the churches aſſembled at Nîmes. The duke of Sully, then governor of Poictou, promiſed the queen that he would keep that Province quiet. He was not able to gain the governor of Maillezais, whoſe ſon appeared at the head of a regiment raiſed at his own expence, and whoſe ſon-in-law made himſelf maſter of Toureille. This war was ſuppreſſed at its beginning by the treaty of Loudun, which was a public market of particular treachery, and of general meanneſs. The prince of Conde, who in the councils had called d'Aubigné father, now cried to him from a window, 'The treaty is ſigned: go to Doignon.' 'And go you to the Baſtille,' anſwered d'Aubigné: and in effect he was ſoon after ſent there.

The duke of Epernon was greatly offended at ſome ſatirical ſtrokes againſt him, in the ſecond book of the *Tragiques*. He was there repreſented as being factious, turbulent, an enemy to royalty, and of a diſpoſition ſo prone to intrigues and cabals, that during his whole life,

life, he alone had ſet bounds to the ſovereign authority. In the heat of his reſentment he declared before five hundred perſons, that if he could not ſeize d'Aubigné in his government, either alive or dead, he would challenge him to a ſingle combat. D'Aubigné prevented him and ſent him a challenge. The duke of Epernon excuſed himſelf from accepting it, on account of his quality of duke and peer. 'We are in France, 'ſaid d'Aubigné in his anſwer, where the princes of 'the blood cannot diſpoſſeſs themſelves of their grandeur for a time, without loſing it for ever: but 'where they may, without wounding it, lay down a 'purchaſed dignity, a borrowed greatneſs, ſuch as that 'of duke and peer. Who is this Monſieur d'Epernon? Is he not a private gentleman as well as I, on 'whom the king has beſtowed a title which I deſerve 'as well as he?' He was anſwered, that Monſieur d'Epernon had a court compoſed of ſo great a number of gentlemen, that, although he ſhould reſolve to meet him in the field they would hinder him. 'I will free 'him from this perplexity, replied d'Aubigné, and 'will ſecure a place of combat even in Monſieur d' 'Epernon's government, and be guarantee for its ſe'curity againſt all his friends.' The duke deeply vowed to take vengance for thoſe words, and that vengeance was to ruin him entirely in the opinion of the queen-regent.

Hated by the court for his firmneſs, tireſome to the Proteſtants by his frequent remonſtrances, d'Aubigné at length formed a deſign to quit the kingdom, but was ſtill retained in it by a variety of incidents. He continued to importune the reformed churches with his counſels, and communicated to them the diſcoveries he had made in the memoirs of Gaſpar Baronius. This Baronius was nephew to the cardinal of that name. His own merit, and the intereſt of his uncle, made him a member of the ſociety eſtabliſhed for the propagation of the faith. He had been choſen for one of the three perſons whom the ſociety ſent every year to the utmoſt bounds of Europe, with proper inſtructions for the execution of their deſigns. This

envoy

envoy embraced the proteſtant religion, and put himſelf under the protection of Monſieur de Leſdiguieres, who from Briançon ſent him to Paris, where they referred him to d'Aubigné to be examined. Baronius gave into his hands the pope's diſpatches, and the memoirs of the ſociety for every province of the chriſtian world, divided into two packets, one of which was entitled *artes pacis*, and the other *artes belli*. He gave him a third upon thoſe provinces of France that were moſt concerned in the intrigues of the court of Rome, it was entitled *Rhetorum commentarius*. In this d'Aubigné diſcovered, that the perſecution againſt the Proteſtants was to begin by propoſals for an accommodation, by the ſermons of the preachers, and by the artifices of theologicians. He there came to the knowledge of many ſecrets, which enabled him to make thoſe predictions always ſo juſt, and always ſo falſely attributed to a dumb man, whom he was ſaid to keep in his pay.

This dumb man was by the enemies of d'Aubigné called a demon. He was deaf, had a look that impreſſed horror, a pale and livid countenance, and a great facility of expreſſing his ſentiments by his eyes, and talking with his fingers: he diſcovered things the moſt concealed, and penetrated into the ſecret thoughts of thoſe who put queſtions to him: he alſo predicted future events. D'Aubigné, during a whole month, had a curioſity to know at what hours the king took his walks or airings, on what ſubjects the converſations turned, the names of the perſons who accompanied him, and the intelligence he received from the court, being compared with the anſwers of this man, were found to be exactly conformable. Meſdemoiſelles d'Aubigné having aſked him the year and the circumſtances of the king's death, he gave them to underſtand, that it would happen in three years and a half, that it would be in a coach by a knife, pointed out the city and the ſtreet; he foretold to them likewiſe all that his ſucceſſor would do, the naval battles that would be fought before Rochelle, the ſiege of that place, the diſmantleing of the fortreſs, and many other events which may be read in the *familiar epiſtles* of d'Aubigné, who, in his

his Secret Memoirs, relates all theſe facts as atteſted by his children and domeſticks: however he aſſures the reader, that he never put any queſtions to his ſuppoſed prophet.*

Weary at length of giving advice which was never followed, he offered in two aſſemblies held at Rochelle, to reſign his employments, and the two fortreſſes, for fear that the duke of Epernon and the biſhop of Maillezais ſhould make themſelves maſters of them. One part of the aſſembly were of opinion, that the fortreſſes ſhould be confided to the care of truſty perſons; others that they ſhould be diſmantled. Monſieur de Villeroi informed d'Aubigné of theſe deliberations in the following letter: 'What ſay you to thoſe good 'friends of yours, for whom you have loſt a penſion 'of ſeven thouſand livres, and refuſed an augmenta-'tion of eleven hundred and thirty thouſand, with-'out reckoning upon the anger of the king which you 'have brought upon yourſelf? They ſollicit us ear-'neſtly to throw down your houſe, and deſtroy your 'citadels before your eyes. Theſe are the terms pro-'poſed by the friends you think ſo faithful; what re-'ply would you make, were you in our ſituation?'

To this d'Aubigné wrote the following anſwer: 'Since you, Monſieur, will make me your clerk to 'draw up an anſwer to the petition of the Rochellers, 'this then let it be: let what you require, be done at 'the expence of thoſe whom it moſt concerns.'

Villeroi made a report of this ſhort anſwer to the council. 'That is to ſay, ſaid the preſident Jeannin, 'that he fears neither them nor us.' A camp-marſhal was ordered to examine carefully what it was that d'Aubigné founded this ſecurity upon. The general officer, who viſited the place, wrote to the court, that Rochelle, the ſiege of which was already concerted, could not be attacked with any proſpect of ſucceſs; that the river of Sevre was ſubjected by Doignon, and that Maillezais was not entirely free, that theſe two fortreſſes, which could ſtarve the king's army, were very

* Secret Memoirs.

very ſtrong, and that the ſiege of Doignon alone would coſt as much as the taking of Rochelle.

Upon this report, two maſters of requeſts were commiſſioned to treat with the governors of thoſe two fortreſſes. On the other ſide, the duke of Epernon entered into negociations for them, and offered the ſum of a hundred thouſand franks for the purchaſe. D'Aubigné at length reſigned them into the hands of the duke of Rohan for half the money. He treated with the Baron de Chapelaines * for his poſt of vice-admiral of Poictou, Saintonge, the city and government of Rochelle, and the iſles adjacent.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Univerſal Hiſtory *of* D'AUBIGNE'.

D'AUBIGNE' ſettled at Saint John d'Angely, where he finiſhed the impreſſion of his Hiſtory at his own expence. The firſt volume which begins with the year 1550, and carries the hiſtory down to the year 1570, and the ſecond which proceeds to 1595, were printed at Maillé: † the one in 1616, and the other 1618. Theſe two volumes were received with great applauſe. D'Aubigné was compared to De Thou, whoſe noble frankneſs he had defended to Henry IV, in oppoſition to ſome of the courtiers. He makes an elogium of it in his preface, which ſeems to proceed rather from an admirer of that Hiſtorian than a rival. The criticks thought, he ſpoke too much of himſelf in his hiſtory; to this objection he anſwered, that having been thirty two Years a marſhal de camp, he muſt be either very cowardly, or very unfortunate, if he had not been able to anſwer in his own name for many exploits of valour. 'To per-'form great actions, ſaid he, is to acquire the right of 'relating

* Lewis l'Argentier Baron of Chapelaines, knight of the king's orders, gentleman in ordinary of his chamber, bailiff of Troyes: the purchaſe was made February the ninth, 1614.

† By John Mouſſat, printer in ordinary of the ſaid Sieur.

'relating them. The reſerve of a courtier, gives 'way to the frankneſs of the ſoldier.'

I ſhall here lay before the reader ſome part of his preface to give him a notion of his manners and his ſtyle.

'I dedicate my work to no particular perſon; it is 'to poſterity I offer it. My plan is as extenſive as my 'life and my abilities. I need not the indulgence that 'is allowed to fear, and have not the partiality that is 'excited by hope; more ſolicitous to reſtrain the free-'dom of my ſentiments and language, than to correct 'my inclinations to flattery. I was brought up at the 'feet of my king, in whoſe chamber I always lay 'during the time of his toils and dangers: ſometimes neareſt his heart, and his companion in his privacies, and then full of the frankneſs and auſterity of my country: 'ſometimes deprived of his favour, baniſhed from his 'court, and then ſo unſhaken in my fidelity, that even 'while I was in diſgrace, he confided to me his moſt 'important ſecrets. I have received from him gratuities 'ſufficient to keep me from falling, tho' not to raiſe me 'higher: and when I ſaw my fortune oppoſed by my 'inferiors, or thoſe whom I protected, I ſatisfied my-'ſelf with ſaying, both of us have done well. They 'conſulted only the humour of their maſter, I my 'own, which to me is equal to a reward. I was for-'tunate enough to bear arms only one year before my 'king. I have been gradually preferred from ſmall 'poſts and employments to great ones, and when he 'was ſeated on the throne, I was poſſeſſed of thoſe 'which hold the place of ſhews and diverſions in 'battles, ſieges and great encounters: honoured in 'being choſe by him with three or four others, to ac-'company him in marking out an encampment, in re-'connoitring places, in defending trenches: in peace 'admitted to his councils, and charged with the moſt 'nice and difficult negociations. Should any one ſay, 'this has the appearance of vanity, I intreat him to 'reflect, that my book is deſirous of making its way 'to the chambers of kings: I have therefore given it 'its moſt magnificent dreſs, leſt it ſhould be refuſed 'admittance. If I have been ſeldomer near the per-

'ſon

'ſon of Henry, ſince France has enjoyed a profound 'tranquillity, it was at thoſe times that I withdrew, 'when the luxury and ſloth of Capua being renewed, 'the pens of flatterers could alone have pleaſed, and 'where courtiers were to be ſeen who pretended to 'be judges of every thing but performed nothing, 'and haunted the bed-chambers and tables of kings 'with the ghoſts of jeſts upon the new military art of 'Maurice of Naſſau, which, after having reviled, they 'were glad to learn.'

The third volume which carries on the hiſtory from the year 1595 to the death of Henry IV, which he pathetically laments, ſaying that the pen fell from his hands, he could not procure a licence for printing. * The council had appointed a biſhop and a counſellor of ſtate to examine the work: they would have obliged the writer to ſuppreſs the truth in many parts of it. D'Aubigné defended his book, and claimed the right of an hiſtorian. They were ſtaggered with his arguments, and would have made a favourable report, but they ſtood in awe of the Jeſuiſts, who did not approve of the two firſt volumes, although d'Aubigné affirmed that he had only related the facts, without arguing upon them. The hiſtorian now reſolved to ſubmit his work to the cenſures of all readers who were neither ſlaves, bigots, or fools. 'You refuſe, ſaid he 'to the Jeſuits, to licence plain and ſimple truths 'which record your actions; certainly then your ac-'tions ought not to be licenſed.' † The Jeſuits procured this book to be condemned to be burnt, by the hands of the common hang-man, in the court of the royal

* The title-page of the firſt edition of this third volume as in the two former it is ſaid, *Maille, printed by John Mouſſat, printer to the Sieur d'Aubigné.* However we are aſſured that the firſt ſheets only were printed at Maille in 1619, and all the reſt at Loudun in the beginning of 1620, which d'Aubigné paſſed at St. Jean d'Angely.

† Appendix to the third volume of the Univerſal Hiſt.

royal college. D'Aubigné complained of this injuſtice, in a very eloquent letter which he wrote to Lewis XIII.

He revenged himſelf on the jeſuits and on the duke of Epernon, by publiſhing a new * edition of the *Baron de Fœneſte*, which is a dialogue between a ſenſible man, and a boaſting Gaſcoon, who relates his adventures. The reader in vain ſought in this piece for the author of the confeſſion of Sancy: it is low and trifling. Many ſtrokes of wit upon anecdotes of the old court are doubtleſs enigmas to us at preſent: but aſſiſted by the notes of Duchat, we are at preſent able to judge whether the dialogue is natural, whether many of the alluſions are juſt and artful, and whether the plan is well executed; and indeed the Baron de Fœneſte, ſo highly eſteemed by Bayle, by Vertot, and the great Conde, is nothing elſe but a diſagreeable collection of low and trifling witticiſms, in a language half Gaſcoon and half French.

CHAPTER XIII.

Constans d'Aubigné.

D'AUBIGNE' had a ſon named Conſtans, who had not the leaſt reſemblance of him; born with a propenſity to every vice, he practiſed all as ſoon as he was capable of doing ſo. Conſtans had the beſt education, the ableſt maſters, and the vileſt inclinations imaginable. He was early ſent to the academy of Sedan, then the ſchool of the young proteſtant nobility. But while his father ſupported him there with the magnificence of a prince, and was employed in compoſing for his uſe the general hiſtory of his own times, Conſtans conceived a diſlike to ſtudy, and gave

* The firſt edition of Fœneſte contained only two books: it was printed at Maille 1617, the ſecond and third in 1619 and 1630, without being divided in chapters, and contain three books, the fourth in 1650 in four books.

gave himſelf up to the moſt ſhameful libertiniſm. From Sedan he went into Holland, where he plunged into every kind of debauchery. On his return to France he married, without conſulting his father, the baroneſs de Chatelaillon, a rich widow of Aunis, who was greatly cenſured on account of her licentious conduct. He was ſoon diſguſted at her freedoms; ſuſpected he had a rival, and when convinced of her infidelity, ſacrificed his wife and her lover to his injured honour *.

Conſtans, being now proſecuted by a powerful family, had recourſe to his father, who pardoned him all, and to draw him from the court, obtained a regiment for him, and a pardon for the crime of which he was accuſed: a diſpoſition naturally wicked cannot be affected by indulgence; Conſtans went again to court, played for what he had not, loſt more than his father was worth, and treated with the Converters for his religion.

His father being informed that he was making a ſale of his conſcience to the jeſuits, forbid him to converſe with them upon pain of incurring his curſe. The jeſuits obtained a brief for him of the pope, in which he was permitted to aſſiſt at the divine ſervice and communion of the proteſtant church, till that happy moment came, when it might be of uſe to declare himſelf a catholick. I do not pretend to anſwer for the truth of this fact, nor do I believe it: I relate it here not as an anecdote to ſhew the great condeſcenſion of the church of Rome, but as a proof of the credulity of d'Aubigné, who in his ſecret memoirs affirms it to be true.

Fur-

---

* Mademoiſelle d'Aumale ſays, in a very valuable manuſcript, concerning Madame de Maintenon: 'I 'have read that article relating to the death of Con- 'ſtans d'Aubigné's firſt wife, in a letter wrote by 'Theodore-Agrippa's own hand.' It was lent to Madam de Maintenon by Meſdemoiſelles de St. Hermine de Chinon, but they would not give it to her.

Furniſhed with this ſuppoſed brief, Conſtans went into Poictou, ſought to deprive his father of his two fortreſſes, impoſed upon him by an appearance of devotion, obtained by it the lieutenancy of the garriſon of Maillezais, took the title of captain, aſſumed the authority of governor, and extorted the whole power from the deceived old man, who retired into the iſle of Doignon.

Conſtans delayed performing the promiſe he had made to the court, that he would deliver up Maillezais; he was deſirous of enjoying his new empire as long as he could: he made a gaming-houſe of the citadel, went regularly every day to church, and in the night employed himſelf in coining money. He gained over all the ſoldiers in the garriſon, and put himſelf in a condition to ſuſtain a ſiege.

His father being informed of his conduct and deſigns, cauſed petards and ſcaling ladders to be carried in a boat to Maillezais during the night. Himſelf advancing alone, and in diſguiſe to the gate of the citadel, was ſtopped by the centinel, threw himſelf upon him, made his poignard gliſten in his eyes, poſſeſſed himſelf of his poſt, cauſed his men to enter the place, and drove out his ſon.

Conſtans retired to Niort with the baron de Neuillant, who was juſt then diſinherited by his parents. There he formed enterprizes upon Doignon, which was already ſold to the duke of Rohan, and kept in his name by an officer who was utterly incapable of any military employment. Theodore Agrippa, then ill of a violent fever, was informed that his ſon was marching againſt him with eighty men, and had cauſed another troop to embark, with an intention to attack or ſurpriſe either Doignon or Maillezais. The old warrior threw himſelf out of bed, aſſembled ſix and thirty ſoldiers, and waited for his ſon in a defile through which he muſt unavoidably paſs. His fever returning with greater violence, Dade, his ſon-in-law, and two of his friends, threw themſelves at his feet, and conjured him to go back to his bed, and ſpare himſelf, or

his ſon the guilt of parricide. Conſtans was defeated by his brother-in-law, and went into Poictou.

The king had promiſed this unnatural ſon to be to him inſtead of a father, but he was abandoned by the court when he was no longer thought neceſſary to their deſigns. Deſpiſed by his Friends, laughed at by the courtiers, rejected by the miniſtry, abhorred by all his relations, he found compaſſion no where but in the hearts of ſome women of gallantry, whoſe benefactions he repaid by ſerving their pleaſures.

Brought back to virtue, or to what had the appearance of it, by the exceſs and even the meanneſs of vice, he ſet on foot a reconciliation with Theodore d'Aubigné, who declared, that when he had made his peace with God, he ſhould with his father. Upon this promiſe, Conſtans went to Geneva, preſented himſelf to the miniſters, performed every thing that they required of him, wrote into France that he had re-entered the boſom of the reformed church, publiſhed the motives of his change, and declaimed againſt the pope in verſe and proſe. Agrippa, moved with a repentance which he believed to be ſincere, allowed him a penſion much larger than Conſtans had reaſon to expect from a father juſtly incenſed, and by whom he had been in danger of being diſinherited.

CHAPTER XIV.

D'Aubigné *makes his eſcape to Geneva.*

THE king having filled Poictou with his victorious troops, d'Aubigné at length determined to retire to Geneva. When the court was informed of his flight, orders were ſent into all the frontier towns to arreſt him, but after many dangers and alarms, he arrived ſafely at Geneva, carrying with him into a foreign country only thirty thouſand crowns in gold, and an illuſtrious name.

At Geneva he was received with the higheſt honours, lodged at the expence of the city, conſulted upon all affairs of importance, charged with the care of the

the fortifications, and entreated to preſide at the council of War.

Two couriers were ſoon diſpatched to him from the general aſſembly of Rochelle, to give him aſſurances of their repentance, and full power to engage the reformed churches of France in ſeveral treaties with the proteſtant princes, the hans towns, the republick of Geneva, and the Swiſs cantons. They alſo ſent him credential letters, and ſigned blanks to be filled up as occaſion ſhould require. They gave him inſtructions for levying troops, and the commiſſion of general for this ideal army. D'Aubigné treated at the ſame time with the count of Mansfeldt, who brought back his troops from Bohemia which were always at the ſervice of thoſe who offered moſt; and with the two dukes of Weymar likewiſe, who engaged to furniſh twelve thouſand infantry, ſix thouſand horſe, twelve cannons, with the neceſſary equipage, and lead them to the river of Saone, there to join ſix thouſand men which d'Aubigné promiſed to aſſemble.

Rochelle engaged to pay them two muſters in Forés, and that the reſt ſhould be aſſigned them on the ſalt pits of Aigues-mortes and of Pequais, which then belonged to the proteſtants. Mansfeldt was advanced as far as Alſace, when d'Aubigné received notice, that the buſineſs had been left to the conduct of the duke of Bouillon, who promiſed to negociate it more advantageouſly.

The republick of Bern conſoled him for this affront, by deputing to him the ſon of their firſt magiſtrate. D'Aubigné regularly fortified that city, notwithſtanding Bouillon's remonſtrances, and the murmurs of the populace. He cauſed the militia of the bailywicks, which amounted to forty eight thouſand men well armed, to paſs in review before him. The Bernois offered him the title of captain-general of their troops. He refuſed it, and adviſed them to confer that poſt on the count of Suze.

Squaramel, ambaſſador from the republick of Venice, offered him the command of the French regiments which were in the ſervice of the Venetians.

Miron, the French ambaſſador in Switzerland, put an end to this negociation, and even undertook to drive d'Aubigné from his aſylum, by ſending heavy complaints againſt him to the council of Geneva, complaints which were ſupported by letters from the king, in which it was plainly hinted, that d'Aubigné was a traitor. The inhabitants at Geneva, after taking the advice of the refugee, anſwered Miron, that they were always ready to ſhew their reſpect to the king of France: that his majeſty need only name the criminal, and ſend ſome perſon with proofs againſt him, and the council would order an inqueſt to be made to do him ſpeedy juſtice.

D'Aubigné purchaſed the lands of Creſt, and built there a caſtle * which ſerved him for an aſylum, a retirement, and relief againſt the continual perſecutions of the court of France, and the repeated alarms given him by ten aſſaſſins, which the duke of Epernon and the cardinal de Sourdis kept for ten years in the neighbourhood of Geneva. He would doubtleſs have quitted entirely his reſidence there, had he not been retained by the affection which the city bore him, and which being every day threatened with a ſiege, hoped to be courageouſly defended by ſo experienced a captain.

His age was not free from the inquietudes of love; he was charmed with the beauty of Madame de Barbany, a young widow of the ancient family of Burlamaqui of Lucca, who had at firſt taken refuge in Paris, afterwards at Sedan, and at laſt in Geneva. She had a great deal of wit and virtue, and her fortune was ſuitable to her birth.

The enemies of d'Aubigné flattering themſelves that they could raiſe an invincible obſtacle to his marriage, cauſed a proceſs to be commenced againſt him, and without being ſummoned or heard in his own defence, he was condemned to loſe his head, for having made uſe of the materials of a decayed church to repair ſome baſtions of his citadel. This was the fourth ſentence

* It coſt him twelve thouſand crowns.

tence of death which had been pronounced againſt him for the ſame ſort of crime.

That he might try the fortitude of his future ſpouſe he was the firſt who told her the news, but ſhe, without any change of countenance, replied calmly, 'Love 'is a deity more powerful than the king of France.' D'Aubigné thanked her in the following lines:

Quand d'Aubigné ſe vit un corps ſans tête
Il maria ſon tronc pâle et hedeux:
Trés aſſuré qu'une femme bien faite
Auroit aſſes de tête pour tous deux.

'When old Aubigné loſt his head,
'His body he thought fit to wed,
'Well judging that a buxom fair
'Had head enough, for both to ſpare.

MR. ELPHINSTON.

CHAPTER XV.

The treachery of CONSTANS D'AUBIGNE'.

D'AUBIGNE' was not willing that his ſon ſhould remain in idleneſs and inactivity, and offered to procure him an employment in the troops of that king of Sweden who, in the ſpace of two years, had conquered two hundred leagues of territory. Conſtans refuſed to go ſo far in ſearch of glory, and reſolved to try if his abilities could be of any uſe to him in England. Theodore Agrippa, who ſtill ſuſpected a diſpoſition ſo dangerous, would not venture to give him letters of recommendation, either to the king, or to his favourite the duke of Buckingham, but contented himſelf with writing to ſome friends in his favour, and even to them with great caution. Conſtans however preſented himſelf to the monarch and his favourite, and told them that his father durſt not write to them becauſe the roads were dangerous. Rochelle heing beſieged by Richelieu, had implored the aſſiſtance of Great Britain.

The king ſummoned a ſecret council, compoſed of the duke of Buckingham and four other noblemen, to which were admitted St. Blancart, envoy from the duke of Rohan, and Conſtans d'Aubigné, who ſtiled himſelf miniſter plenipotentiary from his father. In this council it was reſolved to declare war againſt France, to ſuccour Rochelle, and to ſend for Theodore-Agrippa d'Aubigné from Geneva, as the only man who was able to conduct the enterpriſe with prudence. This Commiſſion was firſt given to the chevalier Vernon, but afterwards to Conſtans, who aſſured the king and his council that they might expect every thing from the great aſcendant he had over the mind of his father.

On his arrival at Geneva, he gave him an exact account of all. D'Aubigné aſked him ſeveral times if he had not paſſed through Paris in his way: Conſtans with oaths denied that he had. His father had made it the firſt condition of the pardon he granted to him, that he ſhould never go to the court of France, for he well knew that the allurements of pleaſure, the grandeur of a court, and the deſire of riches, would ſo ſpeedily corrupt that light and inconſtant mind, that he would be no longer maſter of himſelf.

D'Aubigné took meaſures for his voyage to England: before his departure he conceived a ſuſpicion of his ſon, which, tho' ſlight, made him alter his reſolution. He ſent Conſtans again to England, charged with great promiſes, but all in general terms, for he would not truſt him with his true ſecrets.

Conſtans perceived his father's reſerve, he complained of it, was ſilenced, and departed. His father had been informed that when he came from England he had paſſed through Paris, and that when he had returned thither again, he had had a conference with monſieur de Schomberg, and had been introduced to the king, to whom he had diſcovered all he knew of the deſigns of the Engliſh court: the oaths he had taken could not bind him to fidelity, nor the honours he had received engage his gratitude.

D'Aubigné,

D'Aubigné, enraged at ſuch an inſtance of perfidy and baſeneſs, broke for ever all ties between him and this unworthy ſon: he diſinherited him, and conjured his other children to hold his memory in deteſtation. Although he was now ſeventy-ſeven years of age, he reſolved to go to England, and clear himſelf of having had any part in the infamous treachery of his ſon: he had made all the neceſſary preparations for this voyage, but the council of Geneva earneſtly entreated him to defer his departure. He yielded to the preſſing inſtances of a city, by which he was adored, and thought of nothing but how to blot out, by a glorious death, the ignominy brought on his family.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Marriage of Constans d'Aubigné.

Constans was rewarded for his treachery with the government of Maillezais, the title of equerry to the king, the poſt of gentleman of his bed chamber, and the barony of Surineau, which had formerly belonged to his family, but had been confiſcated by the king. Henceforward he took the title of baron d'Aubigné.

His vices and irregularities could not hinder him from pleaſing: he had all the wit that a wicked mind is capable of, and in thoſe miſerable times, when a bigotted zeal for religion kept all France in ignorance of the principles of real honour, the ſame actions which rendered him odious and contemptible to one party, gave him a claim to the eſteem of the other. He loved mademoiſelle de Cardillac, and was beloved by her. This lady was the daughter of Peter de Cardillac, lord of Lane, and of Louiſa de Montalembert. They were married at Bourdeaux, December the 27th. 1627,* tho' the young lady could

* This date is not only found in the ſupplement of Moréri, but alſo in the marriage contract, executed by Juſtian, a notary at Bourdeaux, in the notes to which it ſtill remains.

could not help feeling ſome terrors at uniting herſelf to a man who had murthered his firſt wife.

What now will become of that romance, which, deceived by ſome erroneous memoirs, I have ſo ſeriouſly related in the firſt edition of the firſt volume of this work? What will become of that pretty hiſtory of d'Aubigné's impriſonment, of his amours with the jailor's daughter, their clandeſtine marriage, and their flight into America? It is not ſurpriſing that I ſhould fall into theſe miſtakes, ſince mademoiſelle d'Aumale herſelf, who had an opportunity of being better informed, could not avoid them. 'Scandal will have it, ſays ſhe, in her manuſcript, that the girl was with child by her priſoner before he married her.' A mere fable, which envy at firſt invented to abuſe her who was the object of it, and which was afterwards adopted by credulity, to heighten what was romantick in her elevation.

For, firſt, the baron d'Aubigné could not be then confined in Chateau Trompette, ſince he had but juſt then done the court that perfidious ſervice, for which he had been ſo laviſhly rewarded. That the court received this ſervice from him in 1627, is evidently proved by the *ſecret memoirs* of the father, and by the æra of the ſiege of Rochelle, at which it is probable Conſtans ſerved in the king's army.

Secondly, if we ſuppoſe him to be a ſtate priſoner in the year 1627, how ſhall we reconcile his ſecret amours, and his flight, with the notoriety of his contract of marriage?

Thirdly, what reſemblance can there be between the daughter of the keeper of a priſon or a jailor, and Jeanne de Cardillac, the iſſue of two noble houſes which ſtill ſubſiſt in Guyenne, the archives of which atteſt the deſcent of madame d'Aubigné?

Fourthly, if it be ſaid (for what may not be ſaid) that an officious genealogiſt, that a venal notary forged this marriage contract, to pleaſe a powerful family; this may be refuted by the original letters of madame d'Aubigné, who always ſigned *Jeanne de Cardillac*;

lac; by the *factums* of her proceſs, in which ſhe conſtantly aſſumes the quality of a gentlewoman; by her ſtile itſelf, which is not the ſtile of a jailor's daughter, but of a perſon genteelly educated; but other deeds, in which madame d'Aubigné has the ſame title as before, and enters into ſome articles with Cæſar de Cardillac her brother and lord of Lane: laſtly, by the reſpect and conſideration which the family of d'Aubigné had always for her, notwithſtanding her miſerable circumſtances, notwithſtanding her religion, and the deteſtation that family ever preſerved againſt her huſband, always baſe, and conſequently always contemptible.

Fifthly, if Conſtans d'Aubigné had married the daughter of a jailor, is it probable that his father, who in his memoirs reproaches him with his firſt marriage, ſhould be ſilent with regard to the ſecond? Is it probable, that he would have in his will bequeathed the eſtates of Landes, and of Guillemer to the iſſue of this mean and clandeſtine marriage? If it be aſked then from what ſource the tale I have refuted is drawn? I anſwer the ſeveral impriſonments of Conſtans d'Aubigné.

CHAPTER XVII.

The death of Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné.

1630.] THE honours which were paid him by the republic of Geneva, excited jealouſy and murmurs among the German lords; to appeaſe them, he voluntarily quitted the diſtinguiſhed place he had at church, reſigned to the city the houſe which had been allotted for his reſidence, by the republick; and diſmiſſed the gentlemen whom he had in his ſervice. In his latter years he compoſed the memoirs of his life for the uſe of his children; it is from them that I have drawn moſt of thoſe facts, which I have related. The changes our language has ſuffered, would not permit me to give them here all the force and brevity they have in the original. He died of the Saint

Antony's fire, and was buried in the cloiſter of Saint Peter in Geneva, where this inſcription, written by himſelf, is ſtill to be ſeen on his tomb, and which may be thus tranſlated.

'In the name of God moſt good and powerful. 'My children, this is the laſt petition I make for you. 'May you enjoy that quiet, which in the midſt of 'ſtorms I have purchaſed for you by labour, and by 'honeſt means. You will enjoy it if you ſerve God, 'and if you imitate me. If not, you will forfeit your 'claim to it. This is what is wrote for you, by a fa- 'ther who to you has been twice a father; by whom 'and not of whom you have received your being and 'your happineſs: to your glory, if you are heirs of 'his ſtudies, to your ſhame, if you degenerate from 'him.' Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné died April 9, in the year 1630 aged 88.*

After his death the Syndics took poſſeſſion of his papers, in which there were many ſecrets of great importance: they effaced a ſheet in his memoirs, which contained a dangerous detail of the affairs of Rochelle, and they intreated madame d'Aubigné to have it ſuppreſſed in the two copies which were in France. He had a natural ſon whom he called Engibaud, which is the anagram of d'Aubigné. He had a great affection for him, had him educated with care, and ſecured to him a genteel fortune. This Engibaud after his father's death aſſumed his name: no perſon oppoſed it, his mother being of a very diſtinguiſhed family. It is

---

D. O. M.

* Teſtor, liberi, quam vobis aptus ſum. Solo favente numine, adverſis ventis, bonis artibus, irrequietus quietem eam colere, ſi deum colitis, ſi patriſſatis, contingat: ſi ſecus, ſecus accidat. Hæc pater, iterum pater, per quem non à quo vere vivere & bene datum vobis: ſtudiorum hæredibus monumento, degeneribus opprobramento:

Scripſit Theodorus Albinæus octuogenarius: obiit, anno CIↃIↃCXXX April. die IX.

is from him that the d'Aubignés of Geneva are deſcended.

He had no children by his ſecond wife, by the firſt he had Conſtans d'Aubigné and two daughters. The eldeſt married monſieur de Caumont-Dade, deſcended, it was ſaid, from the family of Nompar Caumont, who never would acknowledge him. The youngeſt was married to monſieur de Villette, who had with her a portion of thirty thouſand livres.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The impriſonment of Constans d'Aubigne'.

THE baron d'Aubigné knew not how to be happy; he conſumed in riot and debauchery his whole eſtate, and then ſought to procure an eſtabliſhment in Carolina. He obtained a patent for being Viceroy of the American iſles, but he addreſſed himſelf to the Engliſh, either becauſe he had laid a ſcheme to betray the Engliſh once more, or that he now had an intention to betray France. The court was informed of his practices with the Engliſh, and revoked his commiſſion.

Impelled by his natural reſtleſſneſs, flattering himſelf that his crime was not wholly known, or hoping that it was forgot, he thought he might hazard a voyage to France. He returned thither, notwithſtanding the prayers and tears of his wife, was diſcovered in ſpite of all his precautions, and ſhut up in Château-Trompette, where Peter de Cardillac his father-in-law commanded, in the abſence and under the orders of the duke of Epernon his kinſman, and governor of Guyenne.

Madame d'Aubigné went to Paris to ſolicit a pardon for her huſband. In vain ſhe embraced the knees of cardinal Richelieu: that miniſter was inflexible. 'To 'take ſuch a huſband from you, ſaid he, is to do you 'a friendly office.'

There was nothing againſt him but ſuſpicions, and the intereſt of his firſt wife's relations, whoſe reſentment

ment was awaken'd by his misfortunes. Madam d'Aubigné appeaſed the latter by her prayers, and tears; and combated the former with petitions, which were never read.

Some young men were taken into cuſtody for imitating the coin. The priſoners in their depoſitions charged d'Aubigné with being their accomplice: his enlargement became more difficult to obtain, and the miniſter looked upon him as one of thoſe men, whom, in regard to their family, a cruel pity ſhould, without paſſing ſentence upon them, leave in perpetual impriſonment.

Madame d'Aubigné, more attached to her huſband in proportion as he became more miſerable, obtained leave to ſhut herſelf up in priſon with him. The duke of Epernon revenged himſelf upon the ſon, for the *tragiques* of the father; and gave the moſt rigorous orders againſt d'Aubigné, which Cardillac, in conſideration of his daughter, always ſoftened.

Madame d'Aubigné came from time to time, out of Château-Trompette, to move the compaſſion of the miniſters. Her ſolicitations were rendered ineffectual by the duke of Rohan, who had not forgot the attempt upon Doignan. In the court ſhe found none but prejudiced perſons; proteſtants who thought the veneration they owed the memory of Agrippa d'Aubigné demanded that they ſhould ſuffer his ſon to languiſh in fetters; among indifferent perſons, hearts of ſtone impenetrable to compaſſion; among protectors, men whoſe ſervices could not be purchaſed but by baſe conceſſions; among the miniſters, men who although paid for being informed of all, had not leiſure to hear any thing.

The duke of Saxe-Weymar was the only perſon who aſſiſted her with his purſe and his intereſt; to compleat her miſeries ſhe had the reproaches of her huſband to ſuſtain, who laid to her charge the length of his impriſonment; his jealouſy to remove, and his paſſion for the jailor's daughter to endure, with whom he endeavoured to make his eſcape.

Peter

Peter de Cardillac died, and d'Aubigné was more closely confined: he was fond of his wife, because he had no one else to love, and had children by her for want of other employment; he had a son born to him in prison, named Constans, who was afterwards drowned at Murçay. The families of Montalembert, and Cardillac, being apprehensive that they should be burdened with a numerous offspring, forbid madame d'Aubigné to lye-in any more: however they pardoned her a second son, who was called Charles, but upon condition that this should be the last.

Madame d'Aubigné being reduced to a situation wherein the pleasures of marriage are its only happiness, and the fruits of them the greatest misfortune; obliged to deprive herself of the one, for fear of the danger of the other; divided between the duty she owed her husband, and the fatal consequence of that duty, she resisted his ardours, yet yielded to them through obedience, and avoided them through fear: but d'Aubigné, who was of a temper to hope every thing from heaven, when animated by his desires, asserted his claim; and his wife had again a new present to make to providence.

She concealed her pregnancy with as much care as if it had been a crime, and flattering herself that the relations of her husband would be more charitable than her own, she obtained an order from court to have her husband removed to the prison of Niort, that he might be nearer their assistance. It was in that prison that she brought into the world the daughter which has since been so famous; an event from which the unhappy may reasonably derive consolation. The birth of the woman whom fortune raised to the greatest heighth, was considered as a new stroke of affliction.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of Francis D'Aubigne'.

Nov. 27, 1635.] FRANCES D'AUBIGNE' was born in the prison of the Conciergerie of

of Niort, and was held at the baptiſmal font, by Francis count of Rochefoucault, and by Suſannah de Beaudean, daughter of the Baron de Neuillant. She was named Frances, and not Guillaumette, as was related in the many romances her ſtory gave riſe to, and which were printed in foreign countries.

Madame de Villette came to viſit the unhappy wife of d'Aubigné in her lying-in, and beheld all the horrors of the extremeſt indigence, diſeaſe and ſorrow: her brother, diſtracted by grief, emaciated for want of food; one child covered with rags, and already ſenſible of its miſery; another ſtill in the cradle; an infant two days old, whoſe cries ſeemed to call for death; and a wretched mother drowned in tears, who ſometimes preſented to her breaſt to her famiſhed huſband, ſometimes to her infant daughter without hope of preſerving either. Grief and famine had taken away her milk, and ſhe was not able to hire a nurſe. Madame de Villette wept, the ſight of the little Frances moved her greatly, ſhe carried the three children with her to the caſtle of Murçay, and Frances had the ſame nurſe as the little Villette her daughter, who was afterwards madam de Saint-Hermine.

The mother's fondneſs prevailed over prudence, and would not ſuffer madame d'Aubigné to leave her daughter long in other hands; ſhe demanded her of madame de Villette, who having conceived great tenderneſs for the child, reſigned her reluctantly. D'Aubigné was again removed to Château-Trompette. There it was that this girl was educated, who after having experienced all the cruelty of fortune, was deſtined to enjoy its higheſt favours. Let not the unhappy ever deſpair: how immenſe the diſtance, between what ſhe was then, and what ſhe afterwards became!

Madame de Maintenon had been often heard to ſay, that ſhe remembered her playing with the daughter of the jailor, who was about her own age: this girl had hoarded up a little ſum of money, and reproached Frances d'Aubigné with not being ſo rich as ſhe was. 'This is very true, replied Frances, but I

'am

'am a gentlewoman, and you are not.' I do not think it neceſſary to aſk the reader's pardon for relating this circumſtance, as likewiſe for ſome others of the ſame kind which he will find here. The ſource of a great river is ſought with an eager curioſity, the infancy of celebrated lives is intereſting.

1639.] Madame d'Aubigné at length obtained her huſband's enlargement, but it was upon condition that he ſhould turn Roman-catholick. D'Aubigné promiſed all, forgot his promiſes, and for fear of being expoſed to new troubles, he determined to ſeek in America, that eaſe and good fortune he could not find in his own country, and embarked therefore with his wife and two of his children.

Frances d'Aubigné was ſeized with a dangerous diſtemper in this voyage, and was reduced to ſuch extremity, that ſhe remained without any ſign of life. Her mother held her in her arms, wept and lamented over her, laid her in her boſom to warm her if poſſible, into ſenſe and motion, but all was in vain. The baron d'Aubigné, wearied with her cries and groans, ſnatched out of her arms the child, whoſe death and preſence, cauſed and irritated her affliction. A ſailor ſtood ready to throw the body into the ſea, they were preparing to fire the guns, when madame d'Aubigné deſiring that a laſt kiſs might be allowed her, laid her hand upon the child's heart, and feeling ſome motion, inſiſted that ſhe was not dead. Madame de Maintenon relating this incident one day at Marly, the biſhop of Metz, who was preſent, ſaid, 'madam, no one re-'turns from ſuch a diſtance for a little matter.'

After ſhe had eſcaped this danger, ſhe fell into one almoſt equal to it; their veſſel was attacked by an engliſh privateer; while the whole crew was in the moſt terrible alarms, while d'Aubigné, himſelf was melted into tears for a misfortune which he thought inevitable, while his wife was faſtening a pair of beads to his girdle, as if to brave the enemies of the true faith, Frances calmly ſaid to her brother, 'this is all for the 'beſt; let us be taken, we ſhall be chid by our mo-'ther no more.'

D'Au-

D'Aubigné ſettled in Martinico, and acquired very conſiderable plantations there. His firſt labours were ſo ſucceſsful, that his wife was attended by twenty-four negro women. Madame d'Aubigné returned again to France with her two children, to carry on ſome lawſuits, and to recover ſome debts.

Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné had bequeathed three eſtates to the children of the ſon he had diſinherited, and left all the Remainder of his fortune between his two daughters. Madame d'Aubigné did not attempt to diſpute this regulation, but demanded that the eſtates which monſieur de Caumont Dade had taken poſſeſſion of, and which he had bequeathed to his daughter Artemiſa, who was married to monſieur de Nêmond de Senſac, ſhould be reſtored to her. Not having money to proſecute her claim advantageouſly by law, ſhe offered to ſubmit to an arbitration. Monſieur de Senſac rejected this propoſal.

Dade, his father-in-law, had deprived his nephews of Madame de Villette's protection, by promiſing her a third ſhare in an inheritance of which ſhe was entitled only to a fourth.

Madame de Villette, by her kindneſſes and intreaties, prevailed upon madame d'Aubigné to deſiſt from her pretenſions: ſhe went back again to her huſband, who, in her abſence, had loſt all he was worth at the gaming-table.

1641]. Madame d'Aubigné now applied herſelf with unwearied aſſiduity to the education of her children; happily for them, ſhe was poor enough to take this trouble upon herſelf. She was more particularly attached to her daughter, in whom ſhe diſcovered greater abilities and more conformity with her own diſpoſition. Her example was the beſt leſſon of virtue; ſhe ſupported every reverſe of fortune with courage, and the vices of her huſband with indulgence. Their habitation taking fire one day, ſhe obſerved her daughter weep, and gave her a ſevere reprimand, adding, 'what! all theſe tears for the loſs of a houſe. It is 'not the houſe I weep for, replied mademoiſelle 'd'Aubigné, it is for my doll.'

This

This truly admirable mother made her read Plutarch's lives, a book calculated to inſpire virtue, and to form the judgment. That ſhe might ſubdue her exceſſive timidity, and give her a habit of reaſoning and reflexion, ſhe obliged her to relate the ſubſtance of what ſhe had read during the day, and preſcribed to her little compoſitions. The reward ſhe beſtowed on her for this ſtudy, was to allow her to write to madame de Villette.

The little girl wrote with great eaſe and elegance; ſhe had very early learned to compoſe letters for other perſons, her brother who was of a lazy indolent diſpoſition, and was active in nothing, but in ſeeking for amuſements, uſed to entreat her to write letters for him ſometimes, while he was employed in gathering oranges. I ſhould ſuppreſs all theſe trifling anecdotes, if they did not generally prove, that we are in more advanced years, almoſt always, what in youth we promiſe to be, unleſs a concurrence of particular circumſtances, hinder us from ſhewing our real character, or diſplaying our talents.

While yet very young, ſhe accuſtomed herſelf to deep reflexion. Her mother talked to her of the endleſs torments of hell, to which wicked perſons are doomed; Frances ſaid to her brother, who was greatly terrified, 'believe me, ſuch puniſhments will not be 'eternal, our good God will conſider of it again.'

Madam d'Aubigné having one day related to her the great actions her grandfather had performed, and the favour he was in with Henry IV, 'and ſhall I, 'ſaid the child, be nothing! Why, what wouldſt thou 'be, ſaid the mother? Queen of Navarre, replied ſhe.'

1646.] The death of the baron d'Aubigné threw this family into a deplorable ſituation: he had obtained a ſmall military employment, and by this they had been ſupported. Age had cured him of his vices and debauchery, and he reſolved in earneſt, to make ſome proviſion for his children, and when only lieutenant of a village in Martinico, he was nearer gaining this point, than when he was viceroy of the iſles, and his diſſolute paſſions in their full force.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XX.

The education of Mademoiſelle D'AUBIGNE'.

MADAME D'AUBIGNE' returned to France; her debts were not paid, and ſhe left her daughter as a pledge in the hands of one of her principal creditors. The wife of this man refuſed to be troubled with the unhappy child, and the magiſtrate of the place, moved with compaſſion, received her into his family; but finding that her mother ſeemed inclined to let her remain with him, he ſent her in the firſt veſſel that ſailed to madame de Montalembert, who murmured greatly that he had confided ſuch a jewel to her care.

Madame de Villette, whom Agrippa d'Aubigné uſed to call his only child, was moved to compaſſion at the recital of ſo many misfortunes; ſhe demanded of madame de Montalembert, this deſpiſed and rejected niece, and inſtructed her in the principles of the proteſtant religion. Madame d'Aubigné was in that miſerable ſituation, when the great intereſt of religion becomes ſubordinate to more preſſing neceſſities; ſhe conceived that to believe in the pope was not ſo eſſential to true piety, as to preſerve life. Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné reliſhed the religion which her anceſtors had defended: her yet weak reaſon yielded to the impreſſions her aunt gave her; ſhe was filled with horror at the apoſtacy of her father; incapable of a moderate attachment to any thing, ſhe loved Calviniſm with the utmoſt ardour.

Her mother repented of having brought the ſalvation of her daughter into danger; for ſhe was firmly perſuaded that God would puniſh even children who received fallacies for truths. However, ſhe imagined it would not be difficult to efface theſe firſt traces; but they were too deeply engraved, and the little heretick made up in obſtinacy, what ſhe wanted in knowledge.

Madame d'Aubigné being deſirous of taking her to maſs, Frances reſolutely refuſed to attend her. 'You

'do

'do not love me then, ſaid her mother to her. I love 'my God more, replied the Child.' However ſhe was obliged to go to chapel, but by ſometimes turning her back irreverently to the altar, and ſometimes mocking the celebration of the holy myſteries with grimaces, ſhe ſo exhauſted her mother's patience, that ſhe gave her a blow. 'Strike, ſaid Frances, offering her other 'cheek to her, it is glorious to ſuffer for our religion.' Madame de Villette took care to inſpire her niece with a ſtill greater love for thoſe moral virtues which admit of no diſpute, becauſe nature has ſtamped the principles of them on every heart. It was during her reſidence with her, that her heart received thoſe impreſſions of tenderneſs for the unfortunate, and eager deſire to relieve them, for which ſhe was afterwards ſo remarkable. Whenever madame de Villette beſtowed alms upon the poor, Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné was employed to diſtribute the charity, in order to habituate her to the pleaſure of giving, and to awaken her mind to compaſſion. It is by never neglecting trifling things, that education prepares us for great ones.

Madame de Neuillant, mother to the marſhal de Navailles, and a kinſwoman of madame d'Aubigné, ſolicited an order from court to take Frances d'Aubigné out of the hands of madame de Villette, who had eluded the earneſt intreaties of the mother, at firſt by different pretences, and afterwards by an abſolute refuſal. Madame de Neuillant took all imaginable care to inſtruct her in the Roman-catholick religion, but her leſſons had no other effect than to ſhew her that Frances d'Aubigné was very obſtinate, and would be one day very witty. When the rector of the pariſh diſputed with her upon religion, and gained an eaſy victory by his arguments, ſhe put an end to the converſation, by ſaying to him 'you know more than I, 'but there is a book (pointing to the bible) that knows 'a thouſand times more than you do, and this book 'does not teach the ſame things that you do, there'fore you forbid us to read it.'

Madame de Neuillant, offended at ſo long a reſiſtance, thought it better to humble than to reaſon with her;

her; accordingly ſhe leſſened her kindneſs, and hardſhips ſucceeded to tenderneſs. No diſtinction was made between her and the domeſticks, and ſhe was often employed in the meaneſt offices of the houſe. 'I uſed to command in the poultry-yard, ſaid ſhe often afterwards, and it was by that government that 'my reign commenced.' Sometimes ſhe was ordered to help the coachman to curry the horſes. Sometimes ſhe laid ſchemes to procure the honour of combing the grey hairs of an old country woman who was her governeſs, and who ſet ſuch a price upon this favour, that ſhe uſed to weep when ſhe was deprived of it. Every morning, with a maſk on her face, to preſerve the fineſt complexion in the world, a ſtraw hat upon her head, a baſket in one hand and a long pole in the other, Frances went to keep guard over the young turkies, with orders not to open the baſket which contained her breakfaſt, till ſhe had learned to repeat five verſes of Pibrac.

A young peaſant had the preſumption to love her: ſhe took advantage of this paſſion to get letters conveyed to madame de Villette, who confirmed her in her principles. The young man having declared his paſſion to her, Frances, who was conſcious ſhe was not formed for the abject condition to which ſhe was expoſed, acquainted madame de Neuillant with her adventure, who began to be apprehenſive that her little kinſwoman, with the ſtate and ſimplicity of a ſhepherdeſs, might alſo one day be as eaſily overcome. She therefore placed her in the convent of the Urſuline nuns at Niort, and madame de Villette conſented to pay her penſion there; for madame Neuillant, tho' deſirous of having the honour of her converſion, would not pay the expences of it.

The nuns wearied her with inſtructions and catechiſms; ſhe rejected all, and laughed at their pious artifices. 'I ſhall ſoon be a catholick, ſaid ſhe, for they 'have promiſed me an image.'

The proteſtants of Niort made a point of honour of her perſeverance, ſhe who was the grand-daughter of Agrippa d'Aubigné the great defender of their religion.

They

They animated her to a courageous reſiſtance, by the books they ſent her privately, and by letters in which they conjured her not to diſhonour, by her apoſtacy, the *manes* of her grandfather.

One of the nuns, who had more underſtanding, or greater prudence than the others, did not endeavour to win her by dainties and careſſes, but explained the catholick faith to her with ſuch force of reaſoning, that ſhe ſubdued her averſion to it. Frances, by degrees, began to approve their tenets, and conſented to hear maſs: when they no longer offered to conſtrain her to it; ſhe began to have a taſte for a religion, the ceremonies of which were applied to the ſenſes, and the myſteries contradicted by them. Tranſubſtantiation appeared to her the eaſieſt thing imaginable, but ſhe could never be perſuaded to believe that article, which excluded from eternal happineſs all thoſe who were not received into the boſom of the Roman church. 'I 'will admit all, ſaid ſhe, provided you do not oblige 'me to believe that my aunt de Villette will be damn-'ed.' A happy preſage of the goodneſs of her heart, and perhaps of the ſtrength of her underſtanding.

The nuns of Niort were not able to baniſh from her mind ſo unchriſtian a notion, and they were under an abſolute neceſſity to permit her, when ſhe entered into the true religion, to reſerve ſome places in heaven for ſuch of her relations and friends as profeſſed the falſe. They well knew that ſhe would not be long in the Roman church, without acquiring that charitable zeal which hates error without diſtinction, and damns hereticks without compaſſion.

Madame de Villette, who had hitherto provided for the maintenance of her niece, would not pay her penſion when ſhe was informed that ſhe had been converted; it is the quality of zeal in all religions, to be cruel.

The Urſulines of Niort kept her for ſome time through charity, but acts of benevolence are not thought a duty, unleſs they are ſuggeſted by the heart. Theirs grew cold towards her. They would have ſhed their blood, they ſaid, to convert her, and as ſoon as

ſhe

ſhe had yielded to their perſuaſions, and received their truths, they had no longer the neceſſary phyſick to give her. They repreſented to madame d'Aubigné, that their houſe could not maintain penſioners who did not pay, and intreated her to take her daughter out of their hands, ſhe being now old enough to be produced into the world. Frances bluſhed at this diſcourſe, which was ſo firmly impreſſed on her memory, that from that time, ſhe always endeavoured to diſcharge the obligations ſhe had to thoſe nuns, whom ſhe taught by her benefactions not to deſpiſe in others, that poverty which they ſo highly eſteemed in themſelves. Relating this circumſtance one day at St. Cyr, 'my 'children, added ſhe, let us always endeavour to per-'form acts of charity, they are ſeldom loſt upon men, 'and never go unrewarded by heaven.'

Her mother ſupported herſelf by the labour of her hands, while ſhe waited for the deciſion of her law-ſuit, which at her return from Martinico, ſhe went to Paris to attend: ſhe had found her eſtate ſold, and the money diſſipated by her creditors, and her husband's relations. She pleaded her right to be put into poſſeſſion of the barony of Surineau, which had been mortgaged by Conſtans d'Aubigné to pay debts which he had contracted during his minority. She tried alſo to recover ſome conſiderable ſums which the court was indebted to Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, who had lent them to his maſter, at a time when only rebels enriched themſelves. The ſuperintendant of the finances would not hear her. Alas! how ſhould he be prevailed upon to liſten to a woman without protection, without friends, and who was returned from another world.

CHAPTER XXI.

Death of Madame d'Aubigné.

MADAME de Neuillant went from time to time to Paris, carried in a litter, drawn by two mules, on one of which mademoiſelle d'Aubigné was ſeated;

ſeated; ſhe introduced her into the company which ſhe generally frequented, and ſeemed to take pleaſure in ſhewing her dawning beauty in publick, while, in private, ſhe exerciſed over her all the tyranny practiſed by benefactors. She ſpoke of her to her friends, in ſuch a manner as to excite their pity, and appeared angry and diſappointed that ſhe raiſed only their admiration. All that was already formed in her was accompliſhed, what was yet only in bloſſom promiſed to be ſo; her ſtature like her underſtanding was above her age.

The marquis de Cheyreuſe became enamoured of her *: ſhe was ſent out of his way, madame de Neuillant

* This incident has furniſhed an unknown author with matter for the moſt abſurd romance imaginable; it is to be found in the *Amorous hiſtory of the Gauls*: of which I ſhall give a ſhort abridgment here, becauſe I ſhall have occaſion to mention it often, and it does not deſerve that I ſhould take that trouble with it twice. *The amorous hiſtory of the Gauls* is a collection of ſeveral libels, on the court of Lewis XIV. printed at Paris in the Year 1754, in five volumes, twelves, all attributed to the Count de Buſſy, who wrote but one. In theſe pieces, the greateſt names are wounded, the pureſt reputations ſtained, and vice and virtue alike vilified and condemned.

The firſt volume is written with great levity, and contains the hiſtory of madam d'Olonne, that of madame de Châtillon, an epiſode upon madam de Sevigne, and another upon madam de Monglas.

The ſecond volume contains the *palais royal*, or the *Amours of madam de la Valliere*. In this piece there is a little truth, much falſhood, but no exactneſs. The *hiſtory of the king's diſſembled paſſion for the dutcheſs of Orleans*, written without any knowledge of the language or of the court. The *hiſtory of the amours of the dutcheſs of Orleans*, told by Manicamp, who pretends to have been well acquainted with every circumſtance of thoſe amours, and relates them with candour enough,

illant placed her in the convent of the Urſulines, in the ſtreet Saint Jacques, where mademoiſelle d'Aubigné,

---

enough, but not with method or clearneſs. The *Perroquet*, or the *Amours of mademoiſelle de Montpenſier*: the ſtyle of this piece is very bad, the dialogue romantick and ridiculous, the ſubſtance of it true: ſome of the anecdotes may be found in the memoirs of that princeſs, which prove that the author was well informed of the moſt ſecret circumſtances.

The pieces of volume the third are, the *Amours of madame de Bagneux*: I know not whether this little ſtory is true, but it has all the appearance of being falſe. The *falſe prudes*, or the *Amours of madam de Brancas*; in verſes ſo bad, that they cannot be accuſed of being malicious. *Two petitions from the ladies of pleaſure, to madam de la Valliere*, compoſed probably by a friend of thoſe ladies. The *royal amuſements*, or the *Amours of mademoiſelle de Fontanges*. This piece has neither wit nor truth in it: and has as many impertinencies, and lies as words. *La France Galante*, in which are related the amours of mademoiſelle de Fontanges, of the duke of Longueville, of madam de la Ferté, and of the king's growing inclination for madame de Maintenon. This piece is not well wrote: but the author ſeems to have been well informed of the facts he relates, as may be proved by comparing them with madame de Sevigne's letters and the memoirs of mademoiſelle.

The fourth volume contains the *continuation of la France Galante*, or the *Great irregularities of the court*. This ſatire is not by the ſame hand as the former: madame de Maintenon is there ſaid to have been born in America, named *Guillaumette*, brought up by madam de Neuillant, beloved, carried off, and deſerted by the marquis de Chevreuſe, brought to bed unknown to the Abbé Scaron, founds Saint Cyr for a ſeraglio for the king, *&c.* The *old Coquets*, an *infamous libel* upon the *ladies de Lyonne*, and *Fieſque*. The *ſcandalous hiſtory of the ladies de la Ferté and de Ventadour*.

The

bigné, for the firſt time, received the communion, probably without knowing well what ſhe had done. As ſhe was drawing near to the ſacred table, ſhe gave her brother a little blow, ſaying, 'are you not old e-'nough to receive the communion likewiſe?' This ceremony finiſhed her converſion. The ſweetneſs of her manners, and her obliging behaviour, ſo charmed the nuns and penſioners of that convent, that it was eaſy to judge from thence, to what degree ſhe was capable of pleaſing. She often went out of the convent to ſee her mother, from whom ſhe always returned diſſatisfied, and to viſit madame de Neuillant where ſhe had collations which made her regret leaving her.

At that time there was in France an abbé full of wit, of infirmities, and gaiety; whom it was uſual, with Perſons of a curious taſte, to go to ſee, at firſt as a rarity, and to continue to viſit as the moſt diverting man in the world. His head always hanging upon his breaſt, his legs always drawn up, occaſioned by a contraction of his nerves, gave him the form of the letter Z: he uſed to write upon his knees. or upon two ſteel brackets, faſtened to the arms of his eaſy chair.

The diſagreeableneſs of his perſon was more than compenſated for, by the qualities of his mind. He had a heart capable of the warmeſt friendſhip; a lively imagination which painted every thing to him in groteſque, great patience under his affliction: he was poor without diſcontent, ſatirical without malice, indolent without negligence, and angry without reſentment.

Such was the abbé Scaron: he had laid a ſcheme to go to America with Segrais, and ſome other wits; flattering himſelf that the warmth of the climate, and light aliments would reſtore him to his health.

The fifth volume contains *France Italianiſed*. In this piece, the falſe is ſo blended with the true, that it is not poſſible to ſeparate them. *The royal divorce*, which is nothing but a moſt impertinent dialogue between madame de Maintenon and madame de Monteſpan. The *Amours of monſieur the Dauphin with the counteſs du Roure:* a tale fit only for lackeys.

1649.] Madame d'Aubigné was preparing to return to Poictou when madame de Neuillant, who lived in the ſtreet ſaint Lewis, and in the neighbourhood of the abbé Scaron, mentioned to her two perſons who had reſided a long time at Martinico, and offered to take her to viſit them. Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné went with them: her gown was too ſhort, and ſenſible of this impropriety in her dreſs, ſhe bluſhed as ſhe entered the room, and afterwards wept becauſe ſhe had bluſhed. All the company was moved with the graces and agreeable confuſion of ſo lovely a girl, and even Scaron himſelf was greatly affected.

This viſit of curioſity ſoon drew on an intimate connection; madame d'Aubigné did not ſcruple to go often to a houſe where ſhe had an opportunity of making friends and protectors. The abbé Scaron declared, that the air of Paris while mademoiſelle d'Aubigné was there, would be of great advantage to his health, and all thoſe perſons who compoſe the little aſſembly which met at his houſe, made a thouſand offers of ſervice to the mother, that they might for a longer time enjoy the preſence of the daughter.

Madame d'Aubigné, finding that her law ſuit was not likely to be ſoon determined, came to a compromiſe with her adverſary. Monſieur de Senſac was to remain in poſſeſſion of the eſtate of Surineau, on condition that he allowed her a penſion of two hundred livres a year. Her grief at being thus forced to give up the juſt claims of her children, was ſo great, that it brought on an illneſs of which ſhe died ſoon after. The only advice ſhe gave her daughter on taking her laſt leave, was to act in ſuch a manner as fearing all things from men, and hoping all from God.

Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné ſhut herſelf up for three months, in a little lodging at Niort, more engroſſed by her grief for the loſs of her mother, than by reflexions on her unhappy ſituation. Her brother was taken into the family of monſieur de Parabére, in the quality of a page.

Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné was baſhful, timid, ſpoke little, her thoughts ſeemed all employed on her misfortunes,

tunes, and ſhe was ſo inſenſible of her extraordinary beauty, that ſhe often ſaid, ſhe would willingly change faces with the firſt woman who paſſed in the ſtreet. She wept when ſhe was obliged to ſtand oppoſite to a window and was earneſtly gazed at; ſuch care had Madame de Neuillant taken to inculcate, that her glaſs and her admirers flattered her.

CHAPTER XXII.

The fair American.

HER return to Paris took away that extreme baſhfulneſs which was ſo painful to her, and the chevalier de Méré * brought her into notice. He obtained Madame de Neuillant's permiſſion, to be preceptor to her fair kinſwoman. He was one of thoſe men, who, half philoſopher, half courtier, reduced all principles to that one which they call decency of ſentiments and manners. It was he who inſtructed madame de Clérembaud, and formed the dutcheſs de Leſdiguieres, the laſt of theſe ladies having ſaid to him, *I would have wit.* He replied, *well, madam, you ſhall have it.*

It was from the chevalier de Méré that mademoiſelle d'Aubigné received the firſt leſſons of polite life. He formed her to what was then called the genteel air,

* George Broſſin, chevalier, marquis de Méré, was born in the beginning of the ſeventeenth age, and deſcended from an ancient family in Poictou, allied to the houſe of Condé. Some years before his death he retired from the world, and died at the marchioneſs de Sevret's, his ſiſter-in-law. We have ſeveral works of his, which are wrote with great politeneſs and great affectation, his converſations with the marechal de Clerambaud excepted. He had ſerved ſome time in the marine. See an account of the writers of Poictou, and an eulogium upon them compoſed by the abbé Nadal.

but which was made up of affectation, and which anſwers to our prevailing taſte, which is the art of trifling. He compoſed, for her uſe, ſeveral dialogues and tales, that contained excellent morals. Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné loved his thoughts, but hated the laboured ſtyle in which they were conveyed. She always returned with higher taſte to her Plutarch, and at that early age was ſenſible of the great difference between the ſtyle of a citizen of the court, and that of a citizen of the world.

Méré taught her the art of making herſelf agreeable, an art which when reduced to rules, is ſo well calculated to draw ridicule upon its owner, and he perceived, that without his inſtructions ſhe was but too agreeable for him: he excited her, by praiſes, to give free ſcope to her natural diſpoſition: but it was in vain he wiſhed, that while ſhe pleaſed all the world, ſhe ſhould deſire to pleaſe him alone. Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné reliſhed only the general inſtructions of her maſter. To her, a beautiful perſon was but a beautiful flower, hers was one of thoſe hearts, which, wrapt up in coldneſs and reſerve, might have tenderneſs, but never paſſion.

The Chevalier de Méré repreſented his ſcholar in all companies as a prodigy of underſtanding and wit. Every one was deſirous of ſeeing her, and thoſe who had once ſeen her * ſought eagerly to ſee her again. Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné, while yet a child, was followed, admired, and courted, as if ſhe had been a woman, and enjoyed a high reputation under the name of the fair American.

She often went with madame de Neuillant to viſit the abbé Scaron, and it was at his houſe that ſhe contracted an acquaintance with mademoiſelle Ninon de l'Enclos,

* Behave with frankneſs and candour to me, as you do to that young American with whom you made me acquainted, who pleaſed me ſo much, and whom I loved from the moment I ſaw her; you will do me a pleaſure, to write to me about her. Letters from madam de Leſdiguieres to monſieur de Méré.

l'Enclos, the moſt ſurpriſing curtezan of the age, the only one whom the men could love without repentance, and the ladies viſit without diſhonour. Monſieur de Villarceaux, the moſt elegant man of the court, loved, and was beloved by her, with a conſtancy which aſtoniſhed all thoſe who knew the ſyſtem of variety adopted by the lover, and the plan of eternal libertiniſm laid down by the miſtreſs. Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné, as beautiful, and younger than the charming Ninon, rendered Villarceaux unfaithful. Mademoiſolle de l'Enclos, who was not aſhamed of beeing abandoned, becauſe one good choice was always ſucceeded by a better, made no attempt to recover a heart which a new beauty had raviſhed from her. She took a generous revenge upon Villarceaux; ſhe offered to be his confident, and joined her endeavours with his, to procure him the affection of her rival. She had recourſe to all the reſources of a wit fruitful in little ſtratagems; but whether it was that the child whom they ſought to ſeduce, was prevented from falling into the ſnares they laid for her, by the precautions of a vigilant god-mother; whether a judgment premature, and an uncommon underſtanding preſerved her, or that Villarceaux was diſagreeable to her, Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos now found that it was eaſier to fix the roving Ninon, than obtain one look of the modeſt and timorous d'Aubigné.

Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos hated not in others that chaſtity ſhe deſpiſed in herſelf. Her intimacy with Scaron united her in a ſtrict friendſhip with mademoiſelle d'Aubigné: this friendſhip continued uninterrupted till their deaths. If this connexion was a fault, it was the fault of their age: ſuch was the aſcendant that the ſoul of Ninon, weak, yet firm, voluptuous, yet philoſophical, had over all others, that the greateſt prudes, and the moſt reſerved of her ſex, lived without danger and without ſcandal, with a woman who was the greateſt libertine in the world. The reputation of mademoiſelle d'Aubigné ſuffered no more from an intimacy with Ninon, than did thoſe of the Fayettes and Coulanges. 'She is too wiſe, ſaid ſhe,

'ſpeaking of mademoiſelle d'Aubigné, to monſieur 'Fontenelle. She is not formed to feel the paſſion of 'love, yet I would not anſwer for her being always 'inſenſible.' But of what woman would not Ninon have ſaid the ſame?

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Abbé SCARON.

WHILE the chevalier de Méré, monſieur de Chevreuſe, and Villarceaux diſputed the heart of mademoiſelle d'Aubigné, the abbé Scaron maintained that the fair American belonged only to a man who was going to America. However he did not yet ſeriouſly aſpire to this prize; he was moved with the misfortunes of the lovely orphan, doubtleſs becauſe they brought his own to his remembrance.

Scaron was the ſon of a rich counſellor of the parliament of Paris, he had been perſecuted by a cruel and avaritious ſtep-mother, who after making ſure of one part of the father's eſtate, took meaſures to appropriate the other alſo to herſelf. Poor Scaron was ſacrificed to the peace of his family by the counſellor, who was the beſt man, but not the beſt father in the world, and was obliged to enter into a profeſſion, of which the advantages may be enjoyed, without practiſing the virtues, or ſuffering the fatigues.

Scaron, full of fire and vivacity, bleſt with an inexhauſtible fund of humour in converſation, low of ſtature, but handſome and well made, took up his reſidence in the gardens at Paris, a quarter which at all times has been inhabited by families devoted to joy and feſtivity, where life rolled away in the amuſements of ingenious idleneſs. The celebrated Marion de Lorme, who had loved ſo many old cardinals, and whom ſo many young Abbés ſtill loved; the counteſs de Suze, who changed her religion that ſhe might not ſee her huſband either in this world or the next; madam de Martel; the ever new and ever lovely Ninon de l'Enclos: theſe ladies had always a numerous aſ-

ſembly

ſembly at their houſes, whom their charms firſt drew thither, and their wit brought back again. Pleaſure was the great buſineſs of this ſociety, and the arts of it their refreſhment. Chapelle, St. Evremond, Voiture, Sarrazin, eaſy, elegant, and brilliant wits, were formed at this ſchool. This was the ſeminary of the abbé Scaron.

Without ſobriety, without temperance, without moderation, greedy of pleaſures of every kind, Scaron lived rapidly, and at five and twenty years of age, was informed by long and dangerous diſorders, that his conſtitution was very weak: but this knowledge, inſtead of fixing him in the regimen which would have reſtored him to health, only furniſhed him with matter for a piece of humour, of which any other wit, in the exuberance of health, would hardly have been capable. At length a party of pleaſure *took away ſuddenly thoſe legs which had danced ſo well, thoſe hands which could paint and play on the lute, in a word, a body dexterous and well made.* *

1638.] He went to paſs the carnival at his canonſhip. In Mans, as in the greater part of the cities of Provence, the carnival is cloſed by publick maſquerades, which have a great reſemblance to our Fairs of Bezons. The abbé Scaron was reſolved to be there, but knew not under what diſguiſe he ſhould conceal himſelf. He had the ſingularity of his character, and the decency of his condition at once to preſerve, the church and burleſque. He plaiſtered his body all over with honey, ripped open a feather-bed and rolled himſelf in it, and, thus transformed, he flew to the maſquerade, and drew the attention of the company entirely upon himſelf. The women crouded about him, ſome fled, frightened at his appearance, others deſpoiled him of his feathers, all united againſt him, and in a very ſhort time the beau in a maſk, had more the air of a canon than an Indian. At this diſcovery the people preſt upon him, they exclaimed againſt the

* See a letter from Scaron to Marigni in the collection of his works.

ſcandal given to the church; Scaron at length diſengaged himſelf from the croud: he was purſued: the honey with which he had anointed himſelf, the feathers that ſtill ſtuck upon his body became very troubleſome. He found a bridge * in his way; he jumped over it heroically, and, ſwimming to the oppoſite bank, lay down amongſt the reeds to conceal himſelf. His natural heat was extinguiſhed, a piercing cold penetrated into his veins, and fixed in his blood, the principles of thoſe diſorders with which he was afterwards overwhelmed. A ſharp humour fell upon his nerves and baffled all the ſkill of the phyſicians. The ſciatica, gout, rheumatiſm, ſometimes ſeized him ſucceſſively, and ſometimes all at once, and made of the young abbé an epitome of human miſery.

He was no longer able to frequent thoſe agreeable aſſemblies, where converſations, which his wit had often enlivened, might have given ſome relief to his pains. He conſoled himſelf for the deprivation of theſe pleaſures, by throwing his thoughts upon paper; thoughts which were ſometimes full of native ſimplicity, and always humorous. Indolence had made him an eccleſiaſtick; ſolitude and wearineſs made him an author. The ſtoick, in the midſt of ſufferings, ſays great things: Scaron alone, in ſuch circumſtances, was capable of writing humorous ones. Pain, which to other men is the ſource of grief and complaint, only heightened his humour, and pointed his wit.

Anne of Auſtria had in her court a certain number of young ladies in the quality of maids of honour: theſe ladies were the objects of general admiration, as well on account of the beauty of their perſons, as a kind of coquetry in their behaviour, which however had its foundation only in the gaiety of youth, and ſprightlineſs of wit; for at that time virtue was more practiſed than profeſt. Gombaut, Voiture, Benſerade, brought verſes of gallantry into faſhion at court, and the queen's maids were the divinities to whom they were

* This bridge was called for a long time Scaron's bridge.

were generally addreſſed. Scaron was protected by thoſe ladies, and particularly by madame de Hautefort, whom Lewis XIII loved with ſo chaſte and conſtant a paſſion. She mentioned him in ſo advantageous a manner to the queen, that her majeſty had a curioſity to ſee him.

The abbé Scaron was ſufficiently unhappy in the loſs of his health, fortune was not cruel to him by halves, ſhe had puniſhed him for his own faults, and ſhe puniſhed him likewiſe for thoſe of his father.

Old Scaron was a citizen at a time when it was a crime to be ſo. He had joined ſome members of the parliament, who oppoſed the ſchemes of cardinal Richelieu, and harangued boldly againſt an edict which the court was extreamly preſſing to have regiſtred. Cardinal Richelieu was never offended with impunity, he baniſhed the counſellor to Touraine. The abbé durſt not preſent himſelf before the cardinal, till his reſentment was ſoftened, but when he found the court in his intereſts, he ventured to give him a petition. He flattered him, pleaſed him, and would have moved him in his favour, if a month afterwards, death had not laid the miniſter in the tomb, and deſtroyed the hopes of the poet.

The unfortunate old man died in exile. His ſon, inſtead of ſucceeding to an eſtate of twenty thouſand livres a year, had only a law-ſuit to ſupport, and frauds and injuſtice to ſuffer. He pleaded in burleſque, a cauſe on which his whole fortune depended, and ſought rather to make his judges laugh, than to convince them.

Madame de Hautefort, his friend, prevailed upon the queen to ſee him again: Scaron demanded her majeſty's permiſſion to be her patient, by patent. The queen ſmiled, and Scaron underſtood that ſmile as a patent. He ſolicited for an abbey, and was told that he was not in a condition to perform the functions of it. 'Let them give me then, ſaid he, a *ſimple* benefice, 'ſo *ſimple*, ſo very *ſimple*, that to ſerve God no more is 'neceſſary but to believe in him.'

He endeavoured to draw ſome advantage from the quality of the queens's patient, for which he pretended he had a patent.

He flattered cardinal Mazarine, who, as miniſter, appointed him a ſalary of five hundred crowns, but paid it as a miſer. He dedicated his Typhon to him, and preſented him a copy magnificently ornamented, but it was diſdainfully received. An author who has ſo little delicacy, as to dedicate his book to a great man, is generally mean enough to complain of the bad ſucceſs his flattery has met with. Scaron, mortified at the affront he had received, ſuppreſt that ſonnet in his poem, which praiſed the cardinal, and ſubſtituted a ſatirical one in its place; and, what was moſt offenſive to the cardinal, both of them were true.

Scaron now attached himſelf to the prince of Condé, whoſe victories he celebrated, and to the Coadjutor de Retz, to whom he dedicated the firſt part of his comical romance, the only one of all his books which has not been conſigned to oblivion *: he had occaſion for the tax which adulation levies upon the vanity of the great, to ſupport his houſe upon the footing which he had put it. The company that reſorted to it was numerous tho' ſelect. There it was that the Coadjutor aſſembled the factious: there the wits found an academy: the young lords were drawn thither by the coquetry of his ſiſters, and foreigners by their curioſity, to ſee the only man in France, who, tho' he never laughed himſelf, was the moſt capable of making others laugh.

The abbé Scaron made up all the mirth of theſe aſſemblies. He loved ſatire: he hated the miniſtry. He had brought Burleſque into faſhion, and example encouraged it: epigrams upon Mazarine poured in on all ſides. The cardinal read all theſe pieces, ſet the ſame value on them, as he would have done, had any other perſon been the ſubject of them; praiſed them when they were ingenious, and laughed at them when they

* Of this romance ſome one has ſaid:
Caneſcet ſæculis innumerabilibus.

they were humourous; and ſaw himſelf immortalized in an epiſtle of Corneille's, with the ſame calmneſs, as hung up in effigy in all the croſs ways of Paris; in this, but indeed in this alone, ſuperior to cardinal Richelieu, who was as much affected by ſatire as if he had not been a great man. All this indifference and inſenſibility forſook him when he ſaw the Mazarinade. In that piece, Scaron reproached him with every crime he had committed, and every affront he had received from him. Mazarine in revenge ſuppreſt the author's penſion. 'I wiſh, ſaid the abbé Scaron, he had ſup-'preſt myſelf.' In vain he ſolicited the queen's intereſt with the cardinal, the penſion was never reſtored, and he was obliged to have recourſe to Fouquet, that Mecænas of men of letters, and a Mecænas who thought them too much degraded by the meanneſs of adulation, to wound them ſtill more by the inſolence of benefactions.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Marriage of Mademoiſelle D'Aubigné.

1650.] Mademoiſelle D'Aubigné, had contracted a ſtrict friendſhip with mademoiſelle de Saint-Hermant at Paris; when ſhe went to Poictou, ſhe often wrote to her, and always in that enchanting ſtile, to which her good fortune has been ſince attributed. In one of her letters ſhe mentioned the abbé Scaron very advantageouſly, mademoiſelle de Saint-Hermant ſhewed it to him. 'What, cried the 'abbé, in a rapture, do they write thus at Martinico? 'Other women are ambitious of ſhewing their wit, 'this charming girl endeavours to conceal hers.' He wrote her a very polite letter, expreſſed great ſurpriſe at her fine qualities, and engaged in a correſpondence, the conſequences of which he did not foreſee.

Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné returned to Paris, uncertain of her deſtiny, and even of her ſubſiſtance. Madame de Neuillant took her with her every day to viſit the abbé Scaron, either to form her by the polite company

pany which ſhe met there, or to produce her in the world. Scaron was charmed with her beauty, and melted to compaſſion by her misfortunes: he admired her wit, he adored her modeſty, his gaiety forſook him, and he could think of nothing but her. But how could a man whoſe affairs were as much diſordered as his conſtitution, confeſs that he aſpired to obtain one that was in the full bloom of beauty, and the higheſt glow of health?

He offered mademoiſelle d'Aubigné a very conſiderable ſum of money; ſhe refuſed it with a calmneſs which gave him no hope.

He had rivals whoſe paſſion was leſs timid, and whoſe views leſs honourable: ſeverely he regretted his having opened his houſe to young lords of the court, who came thither only to ſee the fair American. Madame de Neuillant began to be apprehenſive of the ſeductions of mademoiſelle de l'Enclos, and appeared ſeldomer than uſual at Scaron's aſſemblies. She was afraid that her kinſwoman would rather chuſe to owe her ſubſiſtance to the prodigality of lovers, than to the labour of her hands, or that the grandeur ſhe ſaw about the courtiers, ſhould diſguſt her with that mediocrity to which as a favour ſhe was ſometimes permitted to aſpire.

The abbé Scaron himſelf hoped to be the huſband of mademoiſelle d'Aubigné: he was deſirous of taking vengeance on his relations, who had pleaded againſt him, and of going to breathe the air of thoſe climates which produce fruits, at *once ripe, ſprung, and ſpringing*.

He had occaſion for a wife, whom, if he recovered his health, he could love, and who might attend him, if he ſhould ſtill continue infirm; in a word he was in love. However he durſt not venture to make propoſals, which it was more likely would draw ridicule upon him, than meet with ſucceſs. But he made himſelf amends with his muſe for this conſtrained ſilence, and ſung his miſtreſs under the name of Sylvia and Cloris, with a ſerioufneſs that proved the exceſs of his paſſion.

Fortu-

Fortunately he learned that mademoiſelle d'Aubigné ſuffered a great deal from the tyranny and inſolence of mademoiſelle de Neuillant: he was ſurpriſed that the unhappy orphan had never diſcovered her diſcontent by any complaint, and his love increaſed with the eſteem, with which this knowledge inſpired him. Emboldened by this diſcovery, he took an opportunity one day when he was alone with her, to lament the injuries ſhe had ſuffered from fortune, and repreſented to her her extreme unhappineſs, in being obliged to owe all to the humanity of an avaritious woman, who ſeaſoned every benefit with a reproach, and who to do herſelf honour, appeared in publick with her as a companion, while in private ſhe confounded her with her domeſticks. Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné anſwered no otherways than by tears.

'If you loſe madame de Neuillant, continued the 'abbé, what will become of you?' Her tears flowed with more violence than before, her imagination painted to her all her future miſery, of which the preſent was only the prelude. 'You will, reſumed Scaron, 'be plunged into the moſt dreadful indigence, or re-'duced to a ſervile condition worſe than indigence it-'ſelf, or expoſed to all the ſeduction, and perhaps to 'all the contempt of libertiniſm. You have no rea-'ſon to be aſhamed of your misfortunes, nor can I be 'ſilent when I know that madame de Neuillant is your 'only ſupport. Again, ſuffer me to repeat, what will 'become of you, after her death?' 'What the good 'God pleaſes,' replied mademoiſelle d'Aubigné.' 'Very well, reſumed the abbé, but when monſieur 'the duke offers to provide genteelly for your, will 'this good God come and whiſper in your ear, that 'your poverty is better than his offered riches? What 'would you have me to do? interrupted mademoi-'ſelle d'Aubigné.' 'There is no other aſylum for 'young Ladies in your ſituation, ſaid Scaron, than a 'convent, or marriage, 'tis one of theſe two conditi-'ons, which alone can preſerve you from the dan-'gers to which your beauty, already ſo celebrated, will 'inevitably expoſe you. Will you be a Nun? I will

'pay

'pay the ſum neceſſary for your admittance. Will 'you marry? I can offer you only a very narrow for- 'tune, and a very ugly perſon. Whichſoever is your 'choice, I ſhall be, if not happy, at leaſt ſatisfied in 'having delivered you from the tyranny of madame de 'Neuillant, the opulence of the financiers, and the 'artifices of the courtiers. But I intreat you to re- 'flect, that I was the man in the world moſt averſe 'to marriage, and that I propoſe it to you.'

Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné replied, that ſhe would willingly chuſe that alternative which ſhould put it in her power to ſhew him all her gratitude, to make the benefit he conferred advantageous to them both, provided that madame de Neuillant conſented to it. A reſolution which did not ſo much prove her extreme poverty, as her compaſſion for him who felt ſo great a degree of it for her.

Madame de Neuillant was eaſily prevailed upon by monſieur Elbene, to give her conſent to this marriage, on condition that it ſhould not be celebrated during two years, on account of the youth of her kinſwoman. When the contract was drawing up, Scaron ſaid, that he acknowledged to receive, with the lady, an eſtate of four louiſd'ors, two large eyes very ſaucy and dangerous, a body beautifully made, a pair of fine hands, and a great deal of wit. The notary aſked him what dowry he would ſettle upon her, 'Immor- 'tality, replied Scaron: the names of the wives of 'kings die with them, but that of the wife of Scaron 'will live for ever.'

He employed all his friends in ſoliciting, that the time fixed, by madame de Neuillant, for the celebration of his nuptials, might be abridged; a whole year was ſtruck off. This marriage deprived him of his canonſhip of Mans. He ſold it to a valet de chambre of Ménage: a pardonable ſimony, at a time when an avaritious cardinal publickly ſold to the court the nomination to benefices.

Scaron ſtill continued his deſign of going to Martinico: it was upon this voyage that he founded all his hopes of thoſe pleaſures he promiſed himſelf, from his

marriage;

marriage; mademoiſelle d'Aubigné was to accompany him, and contribute, by her cares and aſſiduity, to the recovery of his health, the firſt fruits of which he deſtined to her. It was with this view that he ſold his whole eſtate, and placed part of the money ariſing from the ſale in the trading company of Cayenne.

He required that mademoiſelle d'Aubigné ſhould ſolemnly abjure the errors of her fathers, although ſhe had already renounced them at Niort, and afterwards at the convent of the Urſuline nuns in the ſtreet St. Jacques. Scaron, tho' he did not always believe in a God, yet paid a prieſt for ſaying maſs to him every Sunday.

April, 1651.] Some days before his marriage he ſaid to one of his friends, 'I ſhall not make her ſilly, 'but I ſhall teach her a good deal of folly.' He was then deprived of the uſe of his limbs: mademoiſelle d'Aubigné was rather his companion than his wife, and loſt * only the name of mademoiſelle d'Aubigné. Mademoiſelle de Pons lent her her wedding cloaths.

The firſt night of their nuptials was diſtinguiſhed by the violent pains with which Scaron was tormented. Thus the conjugal bed promiſed nothing but regret to the huſband, and cares to the wife. It was a union, ſaid ſhe afterwards, in which the heart entered but very little, and the body not at all.

This unſuitable match was, in reality, a fortunate one for her. The family of Scaron was ancient † in the robe, and made illuſtrious by great alliances. Catherine Scaron de Vavres, his couſin, was married to the marſhal duke d'Aumont. His uncle was biſhop of Grenoble; his father counſellor of the great chamber; his great grandfather was a magiſtrate who made him

* See a letter to her brother, in which ſhe ſays, 'you know I have never been a wife.'

† He was deſcended from Lewis Scaron, who lived in the twelfth age, and was the founder of a chapel at Montcalier in Piedmont, where his coat of arms may be ſtill ſeen upon a marble tomb.

himſelf feared by the Guiſes and the council of ſixteen. He might therefore have pretended to a more conſiderable match than mademoiſelle d'Aubigné, who had never ſeen the proſperity and grandeur of her houſe.

CHAPTER XXV.

The ſociety of Madame Scaron.

THE preſence of madame Scaron did not baniſh the good company which uſed to meet at the houſe of her huſband; not that ſhe had thoſe airy manners, and that licentious taſte which then prevailed: if her character had permitted it, her ſex would have reſtrained her; but ſhe had that juſt and genuine wit which eaſily accommodates itſelf to every taſte. All were ſolicitous to be admitted into her aſſembly, but birth and riches could not give a claim to that privilege. * She ſent away all impertinent triflers, and received only ſuch perſons whoſe converſation was uſeful or agreeable. Vivonne, who had united in himſelf all the wit for which his anceſtors had been celebrated; Mata, whoſe repartees ſtill fly from mouth to mouth: Grammont, whoſe lively ſallies have been preſerved to us by Hamilton; Charleval, the moſt elegant of our eaſy poets; Coligni, in Hungary a hero, in Paris the proſelyte of Ninon, at court the rival of Condé; Ménage, who knew ſo many things and words; Pelliſſon, who was thought hideous till he ſpoke; Des-Yveteaux, who appeared weak and romantick, on account of his great ſimplicity and candour; Hénault, the maſter of Deſhoulieres, and the tranſlator of Lucretius; the abbé Tétu, ſo aſſiduous about all ladies, without being the lover or the dupe of any; Montreuil whoſe madrigals are ſtill read; Marigni, whoſe ſongs are regretted; the marquis de La Sabliere, who, in his converſation and writings, had all

* We are every day denied to princes, dukes, and great officers of the crown, ſays Scaron, in a letter to madame de Villette.

all the graces and all the eaſe of a woman; Madame de La Sabliere who contraſted them with all the taſtes and occupations of a man; the dutcheſs de Leſdiguieres who always pleaſed, notwithſtanding her deſire of always pleaſing; the counteſs de La Suze, in whom they pardoned ſome little weakneſſes in her conduct, on account of the amiable qualities of her mind; the marchioneſs de Sévigné, who has writ with ſuch elegance what ſhe felt with ſuch paſſion; mademoiſelle de Scudery whoſe romances were ſo highly eſteemed by the publick, and ſo deſpiſed by the unjuſt Deſpréaux.

Such were the perſons who compoſed the aſſembly of madame Scaron. The Turennes converſed there with the Mignards; thither the lawyer came to unbend after the toils of the day; thither repaired the courtier to throw off affectation, and forget his perfidy: the men of letters ſaw, in Scaron, one of their own trade, who was not their rival; he could not excite jealouſy in any of them, becauſe his works gave only that ſort of pleaſure which ariſes from a ſurprize that creates mirth, and not that which is produced by admiration, and carries envy along with it.

At that time wit could only aſſociate with wit, and yet poets, and men of letters lived with noblemen of the higheſt quality. They left to triflers the toilets of ladies; to paraſites the tables of the Financiers; to dupes the protection of the great.

Theſe little aſſemblies were very different from the literary ſocieties, which, in imitation of the marchioneſs de Lambert, * ſeemed to have laid a ſcheme for deſtroying taſte, and debaſing letters. Madame Scaron was not there to reſtrain, nor the abbé Scaron to preſide. They would not have ſuffered an arbitrary monarch; and, at Scaron's they diſputed, without pedantry or obſtinacy, upon queſtions in philoſophy, morality, or literature; and often cancelled there the decrees of the academy, which Scaron deſpiſed, probably becauſe he was not a member of it. They had not, as in other ſocieties, diſſertations upon faſhions.

They

* See the collection of M. de la Riviere's letters.

They did not, as in the hotel de Ramboüillet, make the analyſis of ſentiment. No female, weary of exiſtence, and overwhelmed with languor, deſired, with a contemptuous yawn, the parrot to prate, or the abbé to be witty. They were not then acquainted with what is now called verſes of quality. They ſpoke good ſenſe, becauſe they poſſeſſed it; there they read the performances of the day, and paſſed judgment upon them: Scaron read his own there, and this was what he called *the trial of his books.*

Scaron, in the midſt of his infirmities, preſerved all thoſe paſſions, thoſe taſtes and inclinations which had drawn them upon him. He formed to himſelf a gaiety, independant of ſufferings, and a ſtate of health, independant of regimen. He introduced ſuppers, where pleaſure and vivacity reigned uncontrouled. It was at his table where moſt of thoſe lively things were ſaid, without which all converſation languiſhes. Every one either ordered or ſent his particular diſh; Scaron had his in the taſte of Horace.

The diſcourſe, at table, was extremely free; ſuch was the taſte of the maſter of the houſe, a taſte introduced by the civil wars. After his marriage all was changed. The gueſts reſtrained themſelves within the bounds of decency, through reſpect for a wife who was hardly paſt a child. Her air, ſo cold and diſtant, her behaviour ſo reſerved and cautious, kept them within thoſe bounds, and if they ſometimes ſuffered little ſallies to eſcape them, ſhe recalled them to a ſenſe of their fault, by laying aſide that timidity which had reduced her to ſilence.

The more wit they poſſeſſed, the more they admired hers; the deſire of pleaſing her became an ambition to imitate her. Their converſations were not leſs gay, tho' more chaſtened; ſhe was, at once, the model and the pleaſure of them: liſtening to her, they forgot that there were any other enjoyments, even the appetites of hunger or thirſt were not remembered while ſhe was ſpeaking.

'Madam, ſaid one of her ſervants to her one day

'in

'in a whiſper, continue to entertain the company, for 'I don't know when dinner will be ready.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

The firſt views of Madame Scaron.

MADAME Scaron's predominant paſſion was the love of fame: her thoughts ſeemed to be wholly employed on the means of repairing or preventing thoſe injuries ſhe might ſuffer from the ridiculous character of her huſband. She was afraid that part of that contempt which is neceſſarily conceived for a man, in whom every thing is burleſque, would reflect upon her. Greedy of reputation, ſhe ſacrificed all her inclinations to the deſire of extending hers. She obſerved, with great regularity, the faſts preſcribed by the church; and ſaw, with a ſecret ſatisfaction, that others did not obſerve them, rallied her for her ſcruples, but eſteemed her the more. She would eat nothing, during lent, but beans and herrings, while all the reſt of the company at table indulged themſelves in the pleaſures of a luxurious taſte.

'I was not then ſo happy, ſhe has ſince ſaid, to act 'in this manner through devotion, but I was anxious 'to be eſteemed by the world. The deſire of diſtinguiſhing myſelf was my ruling paſſion, no one e'ver carried that deſire ſo far, I was a martyr to it, 'by the innumerable conſtraints I impoſed upon my'ſelf. And probably it was to puniſh me for this faul'ty ambition that God has permitted my elevation, 'as if he had ſaid in his wrath, *thou haſt aſpired to 'praiſe, thou haſt been ambitious of honours, and thou 'ſhalt have them, thou ſhalt bend beneath their weight.*'

At an age when moſt other woman are fond of pleaſure, and loſe themſelves in diſſipation, ſhe was ſubjected to the neceſſity of never quitting her huſband. No other converſation but hers could have relieved him under that ſatiety and reſtleſneſs, which a perpetual recurrence of the ſame company muſt neceſſarily create. Madame Scaron conſoled herſelf for the diſ-

agreeableneſs

agreeableneſs of her ſituation, by reflexions on the ſecurity of her virtue, and the progreſs of her reputation.

The queen mother being informed of her marriage, ſaid, 'what will Scaron do with mademoiſelle d'Au-'bigne? ſhe will be the moſt uſeleſs piece of furni-'ture in his houſe.'

When he was oppreſt with pain, ſhe was his nurſe; when he grew better, his companion; when he enjoyed an interval of health, his ſecretary or his reader. It was, doubtleſs, to this part of her life, divided between fatigues, complacencies, and ſtudies, that ſhe owed the perfections of that active mind, that eaſy diſpoſition, that enlightened underſtanding, which wanted only opportunities to be unfolded.

She acquired a habit of writing with elegance and facility. She underſtood the Italian, Spaniſh and Latin languages, yet ſeem'd to know none but her own. With a thouſand qualities to make her ſhine in converſation, her modeſty, her diffidence, or her politeneſs, never ſuffered her to ſhine but involuntarily.

She ſuffered greatly from the licentious ſtyle of her huſband: free in his expreſſions, looſe in his ſtories, often uttering with irreverence the name of God, he oppoſed jeſts and witticiſms to the moſt ſerious advice. The modeſty of a woman of ſixteen years of age, could not but be diſpleaſed with ſuch language. Her ears were every moment ſtruck with words of which the leaſt fault was their indecency, and ſometimes her hand was obliged to trace them on paper.

Shocked at thoſe ſallies of humor which were often miſplaced, and which continually recurring, became tedious and diſguſting, ſhe conjured him to have more reſpect for himſelf. 'I would have you, replied he, 'be as little moved at ſuch diſcourſe as a Lacedæmo-'nian Lady. You cannot be defended by me, I muſt 'therefore train you to war: I cannot give you the 'pleaſures of marriage, I muſt at leaſt teach you the 'language of them.'

The praiſes which were given to her aſſiduity, her patience, and the ſweetneſs of her temper, engaged her

her to ſuffer every thing with conſtancy. The more her underſtanding was admired, the more ardent were her endeavours to improve it. It was thus that without knowing it, ſhe laid the foundations of that ſhining fortune, which her merit was to carry to the higheſt degree that it was poſſible to reach.

In proportion as her wit and judgment was formed, ſhe acquired a kind of empire over the writings of her huſband, and what he wrote from the year 1651, is more correct, more decent, and more pleaſing than any thing he had compoſed before. Such as the laſt books of his Virgil traveſty, the ſequel of the Comical romance, Leander and Hero.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of Mademoiſelle Scaron, *and* Mademoiſelle de Palaiſeau.

SCARON had taken into his houſe his two half ſiſters. The youngeſt * had wit, and was extremely handſome; ſhe had been maid of honour to Margaret of Lorrain, princeſs of Conti. That little court was remarkably diſſolute. The Marſhal de Baſſompirere was the lover of the Princeſs; and the Duke de Trêmes addreſſed the maid of honour; who, that ſhe might enjoy more liberty, quitted the Hotel de Conti. Madame Scaron in vain exhorted her by her diſcourſe and by her example to a more prudent and regular conduct. Inclination was ſtronger than her arguments, the intrigue went on, and the Duke of Trêmes was happy. Scaron was the firſt to make a jeſt of an adventure, which his wife never ceaſed to lament.

A certain perſon, who had occaſion for the protection of Monſieur de Trêmes, and knew that he frequently viſited Scaron, went to him, and deſired he would recommend him to that nobleman.

'You

* Frances Scaron, ſhe died in 1682.

'You are miſtaken, ſaid Scaron, it is not I, who 'am acquainted with the Duke de Trêmes, you muſt 'go up higher.' This intrigue had the uſual conſequences. Mademoiſelle Scaron was brought to bed of a ſon who at his baptiſm was called Eſtrumel. The Duke of Trêmes grew ſtill fonder of the mother, ſhe had another ſon by him, who was called the chevalier de Trêmes, and his paſſion was only terminated by his life. Scaron called theſe children his nephews *the wrong way*, and made publick an intrigue which his wife concealed with as much care, as if the guilt had been her own.*

A very ſingular chance furniſhed Madame Scaron with an opportunity of ſhewing her humanity to a young woman, whom her huſband had tenderly loved in his youth: ſhe was called Celeſtina de Palaiſeau. She had been unfaithful to him, and had quitted him for a rich man who had promiſed to marry her. This man was diſguſted with her as ſuddenly as he had been charmed; ſhe required the performance of his promiſe, the affair made a great noiſe, Mademoiſelle de Palaiſeau was in a condition which proved her ſeduction, and had recourſe to her firſt lover to protect her againſt her ſecond.

Madame Scaron employed the intereſt of her friends Vardes and Souvré. The vengeance which Scaron took on his rival, and the ſollicitude of Madame Scaron to ſerve her huſband's miſtreſs gave great diverſion. The Financier conſented that they ſhould be arbitrators between him and Mademoiſelle de Palaiſeau. They drew up a burleſque ſentence, by which they condemned him to pay Mademoiſelle de Palaiſeau twenty thouſand franks becauſe ſhe was with child, twenty thouſand becauſe ſhe was a gentlewoman, and twenty thouſand becauſe he was a Financier.

Madame

* A French huguenot, who took refuge in Holland, has in a libel printed at Cologne, by Peter Marteau, put the name of Madame Scaron, for that of Mademoiſelle Scaron, and attributes to one, the fault of the other.

Madame Scaron gave the moſt friendly advice to this unhappy girl; ſhe inſpired her with a taſte for a monaſtick life, and prevailed upon her to go and weep for the follies ſhe had committed, in the convent of the Conception. The Nuns, who were then building it, received with pleaſure a novice who brought them ſo large a portion, and at that time ſo neceſſary to them; but they were not capable of managing their affairs with oeconomy, and expended ſuch large ſums in the embelliſhment of their houſe, that they were in a ſhort time obliged to quit it. The convent was given up to the creditors, and the Nuns went in pairs to ſeek refuge among thoſe who had charity enough to receive them. Mademoiſelle de Palaiſeau remembered the tenderneſs which Scaron had formerly profeſt for her, and that remembrance, which if ſhe had regulated her conduct by the maxims of monaſtick auſterity, would have induced her to fly from him, furniſhed her with a motive for ſeeking his protection.

Madame Scaron received her, and her companion, and kept them both in her houſe, till ſhe had procured a priory worth two thouſand livres a year for mademoiſelle de Palaiſeau; but that imprudent girl knew as little how to keep her priory, as her innocence, and her portion: ſhe reſigned it to a friend, who ſuffered her to die for want of phyſicians and proper nouriſhment.

Madame Scaron inſenſibly reformed the licentious manners, and the coarſe taſte of her huſband, and habituated him to a decorum in his language and conduct which did not deſtroy, but corrected, that humorous turn for which he was ſo remarkable. Whenever ſhe obſerved him ready to exceed the bounds of decency, or ſaw him ſurrounded with perſons, whoſe converſation was not agreeable to her, ſhe ſtole for a few moments from her confinement, either to diſcharge ſome duties of friendſhip, or to carry to the poor in her neighbourhood the ſuperfluity of her indigence itſelf: ſhe was allowed five hundred franks for pocket expences, and out of that ſmall ſum ſhe had wherewithal to give.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The poverty of Madame Scaron.

SCARON lived with ſo little œconomy, that his income was ſoon reduced to ſome ſmall annuities. The theatre, at that time the patrimony of indigent but uncommon merit, had not enriched him. Jodelet, and Don Japhet of Armenia, had met with prodigious ſucceſs, which even then the publick was aſhamed of. The profits ariſing from his books were wholly applied to the payment of debts: every day brought with it ſome new difficulty, and Madame Scaron was often obliged to have recourſe to thoſe expedients which begin with hurting the firſt principles of ſelf-love, by forcing it to a confeſſion of extreme diſtreſs, and end with increaſing that very diſtreſs, by depriving it of even thoſe mortifying reſources.

From books which ſhe did not eſteem, from verſes with which ſhe was tired, repartees that no longer gave her ſurprize or pleaſure, dedications which ſhe deſpiſed, and the revenues of the marquiſate of Quinet * which were very uncertain, ſhe drew all her ſubſiſtence.

Pride, that ſentiment ſo uſeful in reverſes of fortune, when we are not ſo happy as to poſſeſs another much better, the humility of a chriſtian, ſupported her under her afflicting trials. She was never heard to complain of her deſtiny, or to murmur againſt her huſband. She had very early ſtrengthened her mind with that true courage which conſiſts in knowing how to ſuffer. She thought nothing difficult which enabled her to ſubdue that impatience of temper with which ſhe was born, and never appeared more chearful than when ſhe had leaſt reaſon to be ſo.

Scaron

* Scaron uſed to call the profits ariſing from his books, his Marquiſate of Quinet, from the name of the bookſeller who printed them.

Scaron demanded gratuities from his ſuperiors, with all the inſolence of a poet, and all the meanneſs of a paraſite. His wife, who was capable of neither, lamented, in ſecret, the ſad ſituation which made ſuch deſpicable reſources neceſſary: formed to beſtow, yet forced to receive, and obliged in compaſſion for her huſband to diſſemble her ſentiments, her diſcontent lay ſmothered in her own heart, and left no traces in her countenance, her words, or behaviour. In abundance, Scaron dedicated his works to his ſiſter's favourite dog; and in neceſſity to a nobleman, whom he praiſed as much and eſteemed as little.

His friends and protectors were at length tired. They laughed at the ſallies of his humour, they admired his character, they lamented his misfortunes, but very ſeldom relieved him. They could not perſuade themſelves that a poverty which ſuggeſted ſuch ridiculous complaints could be real, and the courtiers took care not to ſuſpect that a man, whom in the evening they ſaw ſo gay, ſhould all the morning be ſwearing againſt the extravagant prices of proviſion. This ſuſpicion would have either moved their pity, or laid them under ſome reſtraint, two things which were equally troubleſome.

Madame Scaron was continually employed in ſoliciting penſions, in quieting creditors, and in vain attempts to move the Prevôt des Merchands, who, by ſuppreſſing certain offices in the police, had deprived her huſband of four thouſand livres a year. However ſhe had ſtill intereſt enough left to get an eſtate of her couſin monſieur de Circe erected into a marquiſate.

The poſt of Hiſtoriographer of France becoming vacant, Scaron, who aſked for every thing, and obtained nothing, ſolicited for that, becauſe Coſtar, his friend, had poſſeſſed it, and La Serre had had the title and the ſalary: our hiſtory has been ſince writ in the taſte that Scaron propoſed to introduce, in epigrams and turns of wit.

1653.] The following year proved more fortunate: Fouquet, the attorney-general, gave him a penſion of ſixteen hundred livres: Fouquet was a man who better underſtood the art of ſpending his fortune, which was the cauſe that he had ſo few friends, than of enriching himſelf, which was his imputed crime. His mind intoxicated with boundleſs ſchemes, a friend to arts, and a lover of pleaſures, adored by the publick, he lived in the higheſt magnificence, and beſtowed with the greateſt prodigality. He was the protector of Corneille and La Fontaine at the ſame time: abilities, beauty, misfortunes, were claims to his benefactions; tho' he was ſuperintendant of the finances, he ſeemed to conſider that poſt only as the means of reſigning himſelf without conſtraint to his benevolent diſpoſition. Women, wits, officers, princeſſes, the unhappy and the devout, all were in his pay; in a word, he was the laſt truly magnificent man that France ever had.

Scaron's penſion was paid with great exactneſs: Fouquet was known to be extremely vain; the poet was continually addreſſing the moſt ſoothing verſes to him, and thoſe verſes were always preſented by Pelliſſon, the clerk, the creature, the wit, and the friend of the ſuperintendant, and afterwards his advocate and defender.

Madame Fouquet, who had not much wit, but a great deal of wiſdom, conceived a ſtrong affection for madame Scaron *: ſhe often took her with her into the country, to Vaux, or Saint-Mandé, where ſhe laid aſide the incumbrance of grandeur, and was relieved from the ſervile ſplendor of a court. Madame Scaron, either reſtrained by the fear of offending, or that the moderation of her temper was ſatisfied with what ſhe already poſſeſſed, never took advantage of theſe ſparks of favour to get her huſband's penſion augment-

* Madame Fouquet is ſo charmed with the beauty of my wife, that I am apprehenſive ſome impure ideas will mix themſelves with this ſtrong inclination. Scaron's Letters.

augmented. She never knew how to practiſe thoſe low arts which conciliate the kindneſs of perſons in power. It was a maxim of hers, and ſhe conſtantly adhered to it, that one ought to live with the Great as a friend, not a ſuppliant.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Lovers of Madame Scaron.

HER paſſion for fame increaſed every day, and every day it was gratified: her beauty was admired, her wit was praiſed, and her virtue was revered; even the coquets extolled a prudence which delivered them from the fear of ſo formidable a rival. Every day a croud of agreeable men told her ſhe was handſome; they depended a little upon inclination, but a great deal upon the diſguſt ſhe muſt neceſſarily have to her huſband.

The handſome courtiers preſumed on their perſons, the Financiers on their riches, but madame Scaron, who, on account of her extreme deſire of pleaſing, ſeemed, at firſt, one of the eaſieſt conqueſts imaginable, was ſoon quitted in deſpair, as the moſt inſenſible woman in the world. Her lovers never ceaſed to complain of the murders committed by thoſe large black eyes, which made ſo many unfaithful, and not one happy.

She was ambitious of being adored by the whole world, without having the leaſt gratitude to her adorers. The admiration of a porter, ſaid ſhe, flatters my vanity as much as the homage of a king. Her reputation for virtue was ſo well eſtabliſhed, that a courtier was once heard to ſay, 'I would rather venture to 'make a declaration of love to the queen than to that 'woman.' And mademoiſelle de Scuderi in her affected jargon. 'The air ſhe breathes ſeems to inſpire 'chaſtity.*

* See the works of La Menardiere, Le Sorberiana, the works of the chevalier de Méré, the Clelia of mademoiſelle de Scuderi, the converſations with madame de G— the memoirs of mademoiſelle d' Aumale.

This principle, founded on reaſon and ſtrengthened by habit, which allowed her a general deſire to pleaſe, but ſuppreſt all particular inclinations, yet prevented not the native tenderneſs of her heart from ſhewing itſelf: poſſibly ſhe had ſome ſoft ſentiments to ſtruggle againſt, for it would be ſtrange, if, among ſo many men, whom ſhe inſpired with an ardent paſſion for her, ſhe ſhould not find one capable of moving her heart.

The Marechal d'Albret * could not ſee her every day without loving her, he ſacrificed to her all his miſtreſſes, and no man ever had more; but he was greatly ſurpriſed, when inſtead of rewarding this ſacrifice by promiſes favourable to his paſſion, ſhe urged him to make a noble effort over himſelf, by renouncing all gallantry for the future, and propoſed the joys of eternal life for a reward.

Madame Scaron aſpired to the glory of making a pious man of the greateſt libertine in the world. Albret promiſed all ſhe required, and if he had any intrigues afterwards he carefully concealed them: but for her who had begun his converſion, he conceived a reſpect and eſteem, which ended but with his life. He was convinced, that the friendſhip of a virtuous woman was more to be deſired than the love of one who would yield to temptation. The paſſion he had felt for madame Scaron being now reduced to that diſintereſted tenderneſs, which thoſe who have never loved, treat as a chimerical, and thoſe who have, prefer to libertine pleaſures, he loved without hope, he was loved

---

* *Ce mioſſens aux maris ſi terrible,*
Ce mioſſens à l'amour ſi ſenſible,
Mais ſi léger en toutes ſes amours
Qu'il change encore, & changera toujours.

'This mioſſens of huſbands the terror,
'This mioſſens of love the ſlave,
'But ſo inconſtant in his amours
'That he is always changing and will always
'change.

loved without weakneſs, and he was happy without guilt.

A correſpondence founded on a friendſhip ſo pure and noble, gave Scaron no inquietude; his wife had often preſt him to haſten his voyage to America, and when he entertained a deſign of going to a climate ſtill warmer, ſhe renounced, without difficulty, every tender tye that could bind her to Paris, and prepared with the utmoſt chearfulneſs for her journey. Scaron ſaw all the letters that paſſed between her and monſieur d'Albret, he ſometimes corrected the ſtyle, but always admired the ſentiments: madame Scaron never anſwered any that were not upon gay or humorous ſubjects.

I ſhould not have related theſe little circumſtances, but to clear madame Scaron of an aſperſion caſt on her by the marquis de la Fare, who, in his memoirs, ſays ſhe was the miſtreſs of monſieur d'Albret. This was a ſlander invented by her enemies, who knew her not before her advancement. Nor ought the name of the marquis de La Fare to impoſe upon the doubting reader; his book is one continued ſatire, it is the partial work of a man protected by the Vendôſmes who attributed their diſgrace at court to madame de Maintenon; of a diſaffected officer, whom the court had corrupted, whom a cabal of malecontents had corrupted ſtill more, and whoſe principles would not ſuffer him to imagine, that virtue alone could conduct any one to ſupreme grandeur, in a country, where he had been a witneſs to the riſe of ſo many perſons, who owed their good fortune to cabals, to intrigues, and to vice.

An old libertine can never perſuade himſelf that any woman is virtuous, he ſuſpects the whole ſex, but thoſe of it eſpecially, whoſe beauty expoſes them more frequently to the dangers of ſeduction; he is willing to find a reaſon for his eaſy triumphs over chaſtity, and therefore readily believes, that thoſe who have reſiſted his aſſaults, have their weak moments, as well as thoſe who have yielded to them.

CHAPTER XXX.

The opinion which the cotemporaries of Madame Scaron *had of her virtue.*

WHATEVER injurious reports may have been raiſed againſt madame Scaron, by general envy, or particular malice, yet her contemporaries bear witneſs to her unſullied virtue: Gilles Boileau, the elder brother of the famous Deſpreaux, was the only one who durſt venture to inſinuate a doubt of her honour. All that family had an invincible inclination for ſatire. Ménage, and mademoiſelle de Scuderi formed ſchemes to hinder Gilles Boileau from being received into the French Academy. Scaron, who was the friend of both, engaged in their deſign, which he prevailed upon ſome powerful nobleman to ſupport, for then it was that the academy began to loſe its liberty. Gilles Boileau was ſucceſsful, he diſappointed his adverſaries, but could not forgive them, he wrote ſome ſevere epigrams againſt them, and in one of them attacks the honour of madame Scaron: he there ſuppoſes that Scaron was obliged to the beauty of his wife, for that good company which met ſo often at his houſe.

Voi, ſur quoi ton erreur ſe fonde,
Scaron! de croire que le monde
Te va voir pour ton entretien.
Quoi? ne vois-tu pas, groſſe bête,
Si tu gratois un peu ta tête,
Que tu le dévinerois bien?

'That people preſs to hear thy prate
'Thy folly would incline;
'But only ſcratch thy ſhallow pate,
'And thou'lt the cauſe divine.

ELPHINSTON.

Scaron, who would have been the firſt to write an epigram againſt his wife, if he had ſuſpected her fidelity,

lity, was enraged at this, leſs through inſulted pride, and injured honour, than from a principle of juſtice and truth. Boileau denied that he was the author of that malicious epigram, and reſigned all the fame and all the danger of it to Boiſrobert, who defended himſelf againſt the imputation, as if he thought it a crime.

Madame Scaron had friends of the higheſt rank, who undertook her defence; they repreſented to the malicious wit, that women were not anſwerable for the follies and caprices of their huſbands, and ſatirical epigrams might have dangerous conſequences for them. Boileau cauſed monſieur and madame Scaron to be entreated to receive a viſit from him, and permit him to aſk pardon. Madame Scaron replied, that ſhe had no pardon to grant for an inſult which had not hurt her; that her reputation depended upon her conduct only, and that ſhe would endeavour to ſoften the reſentment of thoſe who might be inclined to revenge her otherwiſe than in kind: Scaron's anſwer was more ſevere: Tell him, ſaid he, I am not fool enough to fondle a cur that has juſt bit me.

Boileau atoned in ſome degree for the injuſtice he had been guilty of, by a ſonnet very obliging for the lady, but not ſo for the huſband: he there acknowledges, that he was too well convinced of the merit of Iris, to aim his ſatire at her, but that her wretched huſband was very different from her: ſhe might have had room to be pleaſed, if Scaron had none to complain; but he, in revenge, wrote fourteen very bitter epigrams againſt Boileau, one of which I ſhall give the reader here.

Avec Iris je n'ai rien de commun:
D'autres l'ont dit, mais c'eſt tout un,
Et j'en rirai ſi bon me ſemble:
Mais ce que tout le monde & moi
Ont de commun enſemble,
C'eſt de croire auſſi vrai qu'un article de foi,

Qu'un honnête homme & toi
N'ont rien qui ſe reſſemble.

'Iris and I have nought alike;
'A joke, which tho' not new, may ſtrike.
'Myſelf ſhall join, if I think fit,
'As who would not with ſo much wit?
'But I and all, in one agreed,
'Muſt hold it certain as our creed,
'That a gentleman and thee
'In one ſhape we ne'er ſhall ſee.

ELPHINSTON.

It is ſo very difficult for a woman, young and beautiful, to be continually expoſed to ſolicitations, yet reſiſt them all, that it is not ſurpriſing madame Scaron ſhould be eſteemed by thoſe who knew her, and ſuſpected by thoſe who knew her not; to receive every day adorations from the moſt agreeable men, and to ſacrifice them to one of the moſt diſagreeable; to have the rights of a wife, and the virtues of a virgin; to be condemned by marriage itſelf to celibacy, and to be exactly faithful to a huſband who could not be one, is a moſt incredible paradox; and even ladies, who are too candid to form a judgment of their ſex by their own frailty, yet cannot conceive how a woman in the bloom of youth, her paſſions raiſed by gay and ſplendid company, ſhould refuſe to reſign thoſe charms to a lover, which a huſband could not poſſeſs. But a ſmall ſhare of piety, and a great deal of pride are powerful ſupports to virtue.

1670.] Her reputation was too well eſtabliſhed, to be overthrown by the wit of a few malicious poets. Sorbiere, an author not very remarkable for his diſinclination to ſlander, and who died a long time before her elevation, refutes all that was ſaid to her diſadvantage, by giving her the praiſes ſhe deſerved.

'The

'The marriage of Monſieur Scaron, ſays he, will 'not be conſidered as the leaſt ſhining circumſtance in 'his life. The young beauty, whom he choſe, rather 'to delight his eyes, and to converſe with in his hours 'of ſolitude and pain, than for any occaſion he had 'for a wife, will always be the ornament of his ſtory. 'Neither the unſuitableneſs of ſuch a match, nor the 'youth, beauty, and lively wit of the lady, ever ex-'poſed her character to unfavourable cenſures; and 'although ſeveral perſons of the higheſt rank, and 'greateſt fortune in the kingdom, ſecretly ſighed for 'her, yet by the regularity of her conduct, ſhe ac-'quired an univerſal eſteem.' Of her it may be juſtly ſaid, that with the continence of a virgin, ſhe performed all the duties of the higheſt conjugal affection.

Mademoiſelle de Scuderi made her amends by her praiſes, for the ſatirical verſes of Gilles Boileau. In one of thoſe romances, where, under Greek and Roman names, ſhe drew the characters of the moſt celebrated Perſons of her time, and with ſuch truth and exactneſs, that notwithſtanding the great variety, every one was eaſily known, ſhe introduces Scaron and his wife, under the names of Scaurus and Lyriana, who enter the temple of Fortune, to conſult the oracle, concerning their future deſtiny. 'A woman, adds ſhe, drew every one's attention by the livery of her ſlaves; ſhe was known to be the wife of him who was carried in the painted and gilt machine, covered with a kind of little canopy.'

'Lyriana was nobly deſcended: her parents were perſecuted by fortune, and had carried her while an infant into the depth of Lybia, from whence ſhe was now returned, ſo exquiſitely lovely, that ſcarce any thing could be compared to her without injuſtice; ſhe was very tall, but her ſtature ſuch as not to impreſs awe, but to give dignity to her mien; her complexion was fair, her hair was of a bright cheſnut colour, the form of her face was exceſſively agreeable, and her mouth finely ſhaped; her air was noble yet tender, modeſt yet gay, and to make her beauty more ſtriking

and perfect, ſhe had the fineſt eyes in the world: they were large and black, ſhining, ſoft, paſſionate, full of fire and expreſſion; there was a nameleſs charm in their looks, a ſoft languor ſometimes appeared in them, with all its inſinuating charms, and ſometimes the ſprightlineſs of her wit, and the gaiety of her temper, pointed their glances, and gave them new luſtre; her mind was well ſuited to her perſon, elevated, yet full of ſoftneſs, her wit lively, juſt, inſinuating; ſhe ſpoke correctly, but unaffected and graceful; ſhe knew the world and many things which ſhe did not appear to know, and with a thouſand inevitable charms, ſhe ſeemed to be ignorant, that ſhe was beautiful; thus adorned with every grace of virtue, wit and beauty, it may be juſtly ſaid, that ſhe merited all that admiration ſhe inſpired, when ſhe entered the temple of Fortune.'

Scaurus, whoſe character and deſcription I ſuppreſs, with an air half ſerious, half mocking, deſired the oracle to inform him, whether there was not ſome method to be tried, by which he could be again what he had been formerly, and once more reſemble his picture, which was placed upon the top of the canopy. 'You know not, replied the venerable prieſt, what it 'is that you demand, you would be young, lively, 'agreeable: but with all this, you would be but an 'ordinary man, and your reputation would be con-'fined within the circle of your friends and acquain-'tance; but by the alteration that has happened in 'your conſtitution and perſon, you are become ſingular 'in your ſpecies; you have united joy with grief, 'pain with pleaſure, your writings by their ingenious 'humour and great variety, give feſtivity to the whole 'world; the gods by beſtowing upon you the amiable 'Lyriana, have given you a thouſand times more 'than they have taken from you, although you had 'been more beautiful than Paris. The oracle, ſaid 'Scaurus as he withdrew, has told me nothing which I 'did not know before.' The fair Lyriana is after-wards called, but ſhe declares ſhe will put no queſtions to the oracle. 'For, ſays ſhe to the prieſt, if I am 'to be happy, I ſhall be ſo infallibly, and if any

'misfor-

'misfortune is to happen to me, I ſhall know it but 'too ſoon. You have ſpoken ſo wiſely,' ſaid the prieſt, who inſpired every other woman with terror, but was complaiſant to Lyriana only, 'that I do not 'doubt, but you will one day be as happy as you 'deſerve to be.'

Madame Scaron was four and twenty years of age when Mademoſelle de Scuderi wrote this prediction. This teſtimony to her virtue, wrapt up in a fiction, where the character of her who is the ſubject of it, is ſo admirably ſupported, is doubtleſs to be preferred to the reports of ſuch perſons as during her high ſtation attacked her through envy, and after her death through miſtake. Scaron, whoſe letters are full of his eſteem and tenderneſs for his wife, thanked Mademoiſelle de Scudery in a poetical epiſtle, wherein he calls Lyriana,

Celle par qui le ciel ſoulage ſan malheur,
Digne d'un autre époix comme d'un ſort meilleur.

'The dame whom Heav'n has ſent to ſooth his fate,
'Deſerves, to ſooth her own, another mate.

ELPHINSTON.

and earneſtly exhorts her to repay a debt her gratitude was charged with. Madame Scaron afterwards ſettled a penſion of two thouſand livres a year upon Mademoiſelle de Scuderi.

Ought I to give a place here to thoſe verſes which it has been reported Scaron wrote againſt his wife, and which have been ſince made uſe of to bring her virtue into ſuſpicion? Yes, for if I ſuppreſs them, I ſhall be accuſed of paſſing over in ſilence whatever was diſadvantageous to her; and the candour of hiſtory ſubmits not to ſuch artifices: here then they follow, however contemptible.

Je vous ai donné des bijoux,
Collet, robe, & jupe:
Enfin jamais dupe
N'a tant fait pour vous.

Monſieur

Monſieur votre frere
A fait de grands repas :
Vos ſœurs & votre mere
Ont eu de bons ducats,
Que je ne compte pas.

Je vous ai promenée aux champs ;
Souvent à ma porte,
Soit que j'entre ou ſorte,
Je vois vos marchands :

Pour porter à l'aiſe
Votre chien de C—,
Tous les jours une chaiſe
Coute un bel écu
A moi pauvre cocu.

'More gowns and ſmocks I gave
'Your nakedneſs to hide;
'And toys, than ever ſlave
'To poverty or pride.

'The worthy 'ſquire your brother
'Has had his treats untold:
'To ſiſters and to mother
'I have my ducats dol'd.

'Even in the green retreat,
'If there your fancy runs,
'Which way I go, I meet
'Your dealers or your duns.

'And then again in town,
'Your lazy bones to bear,
'Your cuckold with a crown
'Muſt daily find a chair.

ELPHINSTON.

Theſe verſes would have never been mentioned, if an ignorant enemy had not inſerted them in one edition of Scaron's works, and a friend, as ignorant, ſtruck them out of another. They are not levelled againſt Madame Scaron, for ſiſters are mentioned in them, and ſhe never had any ſiſters; the author ſpeaks of

of ducats, which he gave to the mother, and it is very certain that Madame d'Aubigné had but a ſlight acquaintance with Scaron. A huſband is there repreſented going frequently abroad, which does not agree with the ſtate of immobility, in which poor Scaron lived. What are theſe verſes then but complaints, which the poet puts into the mouth of a jealous and diſcontented huſband.

Some hints may be applicable to Madame Scaron, as well as to a thouſand other women, but they are applied only to her, and an epigram has been made of the four laſt lines of this humorous ſong. But although theſe verſes had been really adddreſſed to Madame Scaron, yet they prove nothing to thoſe who knew the peculiarity of the author's character, and the great eſteem he had for his wife: but it is of no importance to whom the verſes are addreſſed, they will be always conſidered as the lively ſally of a man remarkable for his ſatirical turn. In his quarrel with Boileau for aſperſing the conduct of his wife, Boileau never anſwered to the expoſtulations of Madame Scaron's friends, that he only gave her huſband the title which he himſelf aſſumed.

Queen Chriſtina, the glory of her own ſex, and the admiration of ours, came to Paris: the ladies ſaw her, and groaned at the ſight of ſuch a woman; ſhe ſaw the courtiers, and groaned at the ſight of ſuch men. The Prince of Condé, and the cardinal de Retz, ſeemed alone worthy of her praiſes: and among the women Madémoiſelle de l'Enclos, the Counteſs of Brégy and Madame Scaron, whom all the princeſſes of France, would have thought too much honoured by a glance from them. Scaron was preſented to Chriſtina by Ménage, 'I permit you, ſaid ſhe to him, to be my 'lover; the Queen of France has made you her pa-'tient, I create you my Rolando.'

'You do well, madame, ſaid the poet, to give me 'this title, ſince I ſhould certainly have taken it if you 'had not.' Chriſtina looking at Madame Scaron, ſaid to the Counteſs of Brégy, 'I know not what Scaron

'is

'is, but I think nothing leſs than a queen of Sweden 'could make a man unfaithful to that woman.' She commanded Scaron to write to her, and told him that ſhe was not ſurpriſed, that with the moſt agreeable woman in Paris, he was, notwithſtanding his infirmities, the gayeſt man there.

Madame Fouquet was ſo charmed with her converſation, that ſhe could not reſolve to go to Saint-Mande without her, and deſired Madame Bonneau to propoſe to her, to ſpend ſome months with her there. Madame Scaron readily conſented, but her huſband, who found no other conſolation in his pains, no other charm againſt languor and dejection, than the company of a woman in whom compaſſion excited all the tender ſolicitude of the moſt ardent love, obſtinately oppoſed this viſit, notwithſtanding all the intreaties and repreſentations of Madame de Montchevreüil, then Madame Scaron's friend and protectreſs, and afterwards dependant on, and protected by her.

The great reputation Madame Scaron had acquired, ſpread even to the court, and there where ridicule is with ſuch difficulty to be avoided, ſhe gained eſteem and reſpect, notwithſtanding the contemptuous idea, combined with the name of her huſband. Her lovers talked more of her extreme reſerve than of her beauty; the whole family of Mancini were deſirous of being acquainted with her; but ſhe who expreſſed moſt eagerneſs to know her, was the lady whom the King loved; ſhe invited her to ſpend ſome days with her at Brouage, the ſeat of every pleaſure, and the reſidence of Mademoiſelle de Mortemat: it never entered into her imagination, that a lady ſo much admired ſhould not be rich enough to undertake this little journey: Madame Scaron excuſed herſelf from going under pretence of indiſpoſition.*

CHAP.

---

* Letters from Scaron to M. de Villette.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The death of Scaron.

1659.] Scaron at length fell upon an expedient to procure a ſolid eſtabliſhment by becoming a kind of farmer of the revenue. His ſchemes for going to America had not ſucceeded; inſtead of taking a voyage to Martinico, he was contented to engage with the trading companies in ſome enterpriſes, in which however he failed; but his laſt ſcheme ſucceeded better.

At the gates of Paris, there are always a great number of ſoldiers, and vagabonds, who wait there for carriages loaded with goods of every kind, which for a little money they help to unload, and carry the goods to the houſes of the merchants and ſhop-keepers: at ſome of the gates they were oppreſt with the great numbers who offered their ſervice, while at others, the waggoners could find no one to aſſiſt them.

It often happened that ſharpers mingled among theſe induſtrious poor; Scaron propoſed that a certain number of them who were known to be inhabitants of Paris, ſhould be formed into a Body, and an oath authoriſed by the magiſtrate ſhould be adminiſtred to them, by which they bound themſelves to offer their ſervices only to the merchants, who ſhould likewiſe promiſe to give them a reaſonable gratuity; and that they ſhould then be diſtributed at the different gates of the city. This ſcheme was approved of. Scaron took great care to prevent any impoſition ariſing from it upon the publick, but would not have his name appear in it. After many difficulties and great oppoſition, it was erected into an office at the town-houſe, but the chancellor cancelled it, as injurious to the people. Scaron had recourſe to Fouquet who ſupported him with his intereſt; new obſtacles intervened every day, he overcame them all, and made uſe of his privilege. The purchaſer failing in his engagements, Scaron revenged himſelf by a ſatire, claimed his right, and managed

naged thoſe offices himſelf, which produced him, ſix thouſand livres.

This happineſs was ſoon interrupted. Scaron's infirmities increaſed every day, he had no health but in his mind, and the efforts of that mind weakened his body. The court was now preparing for a journey to Guyenne, on account of the king's intended marriage: one of Scaron's friends, who was to attend it, came to take leave of him.

'I ſhall die very ſoon, ſaid Scaron to him, I feel 'I ſhall, and I ſhould quit the world without regret, 'if I did not leave behind me, without fortune, 'without hope, a wife, whom I have the greateſt rea- 'ſon to love. I recommend her to you, I recommend 'her to all my friends: alas! added he, with a ſigh, 'what will become of her?

His prediction was fulfilled, his diſeaſe grew ſo dangerous that his body, weakened by continual ſufferings, could no longer reſiſt its force. He was ſeized with ſo violent a hickup, that madam Scaron feared every moment would be his laſt; however, this ſymptom decreaſed. 'If I recover, ſaid he, I will write 'a fine ſatire againſt the hickup' but he was diſpen- 'ſed with from keeping his word.

Madame Scaron was inceſſantly employed in preparing him for a chriſtian death; he had no religion, tho' he had had a canonſhip, but acquired it as ſoon as he had a wife: he had looked upon the moſt ſacred myſteries as ſubjects of raillery: ſhe taught him to conſider them as matters of faith; by her arguments he was prevailed upon to deſire the ſacraments with earneſtneſs, and to receive them with edification.

A faith ſo new could not but be wavering: although he was not convinced that there was a hell for the wicked, yet he was terrified at the dreadful repreſentation of its pains. 'If there is a hell, ſaid he to 'Madame Scaron, it cannot be for me, who without 'you would have found it a thouſand times upon 'earth.' A pious friar, who was fully perſuaded, that pains and afflictions were favours from heaven, ſaid to him, 'I rejoice with you, Monſieur, that the good

'God

'God viſits you oftener than any other. Ah! father, 'replied Scaron, he does me too much honour. We 'ought to thank him for it, replied the Prieſt. Truly, 'I know not why,' ſaid the dying man.

Already his ſtrength, already his voice abandoned him, but his gaiety ſtill remained, his tongue ice'd over by the hand of death, dictated the moſt humorous of wills. He bequeathed to the two Corneilles, five hundred livres of patience: to Gilles Boileau, the falling ſickneſs, and a mortification; to the academy, the privilege of changing the language at its pleaſure; to his ſervants he aſſigned penſions upon his jeſts and repartees; and to his wife, he left permiſſion to marry again: obſerving his relations and domeſticks ſtanding weeping around his bed, he ſaid to them, 'My friends, I ſhall never make you cry ſo much as I 'have made you laugh,' and a moment afterwards, 'A 'little more gout, a little more anguiſh, ſaid he, and 'I ſhall be mighty well.'

When he prepared to take leave of his wife, he ceaſed to jeſt, he thanked her for all her tenderneſs and cares, he recommended her earneſtly to monſieur d'Elbene his executor, and making an effort to take hold of her hand, 'I conjure you, added he, to re-'member me ſometimes. I leave you poor and diſ-'treſſed, virtue does not give riches, yet never ceaſe 'to be virtuous:' a few moments before he expired, he 'ſaid, 'I could never have believed, that it was ſo 'eaſy to laugh at death.'

He died October the *---- 1660, aged fifty one years. Madame Scaron lamented him, as if in loſing him ſhe had really ſuffered a loſs.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The poverty of Madame Scaron, her conduct.

MADAME Scaron, whoſe deſtiny it was to experience the extremes of every condition in life,

* No hiſtorian has been exact with regard to the day on which he died.

life, now ſaw herſelf expoſed to all the horrors of indigence: her huſband had left her nothing but jeſts and debts.

Her friends did not abandon her in this diſtreſs, ſhe uſed their favours with moderation. Her lovers hoped a great deal from her poverty, but it was in vain that they concealed their intereſted deſigns under the appearance of compaſſion for her diſtreſs, and reverence for her virtue.

Her heart ſuffered more pain in receiving, than theirs felt pleaſure in giving. The greater regard they paid to her delicacy, the more they excited that noble pride which ſhewed her ſhe merited that regard. She was more humbled by her own reflexions, and the gratitude ſhe owed her friends, than ſhe could have been by the inſolence of ſuperiority, which by ſeeming to exaggerate the benefit, leſſens it, and makes the benefactor hated. Madame Scaron, received preſents with the deepeſt gratitude, but with the ſame air as ſhe would have beſtowed them.

She had recourſe to her equals, with leſs reluctance, than to her ſuperiors: her obligations to the former, ſhe might one day have it in her power to return, their benefactions were loans which might be repaid; but how ſhould ſhe acquit herſelf towards the others? ſhe well knew that it is not ſafe to be at once the object of admiration and pity to the Great.

Her beauty was then in its higheſt luſtre; ſhe had all the majeſty of a matron, with the bloom of youth, and the innocence of a virgin: madame Scaron might ſay with Monimia,

Et veuve maintenant ſans avoir eu d'époux.

I'm now a widow who have had no ſpouſe.

Madame Scaron had great dignity in her perſon and air; her action was full of grace, her ſmiles enchanting; theſe charms even age could not deprive her of: her eyes were ſo expreſſive of every emotion of her mind, that whatever ſhe ſaid, went directly to the heart.

Lively in her diſpoſition, and ſecure enough of herſelf, to have in her manners that eaſy freedom which gives

gives hope, in her conſtitution ſhe had that coldneſs which repreſſes it: ſhe never permitted in her moſt intimate friends any liberties which might weaken that reſpect ſhe was ſo ſolicitous to inſpire * this reſerve ſhe learnt of her mother, who in her whole life had never embraced her but twice, and who had often told her it was indecent to embrace even her relations.

Her modeſty was ſo ſcrupulous, that one day when ſhe was at the hotel d'Albret, and being obliged, on account of the great heat of the weather, to uncover her neck, the company exclaimed againſt her, for ſo carefully concealing beauties, which were the boaſt of ſo many others. Madame de Richelieu told her that till then, ſhe had always thought her exceſſive caution proceeded from a motive very different.

She was naturally inclined to melancholy, but it was not of that kind which gives peeviſhneſs to the temper; hers threw a nameleſs tenderneſs into her converſation, and gave ſuch inſinuating ſweetneſs to her looks and motions, as inſenſibly engaged the affection of all who beheld her. In her every thing was graceful, and even her wit was ſo artleſs and unaffected, that

* Madame Scaron is attacked by the handſomeſt lords in the court, and the richeſt and moſt powerful of the Financiers: but I am very confident that ſhe will ſupport many aſſaults before ſhe yields: that gaiety in her manners which allures ſo many perſons, ought not to give them hopes of ſucceeding with her, ſince it is only a proof of the juſt confidence ſhe has in herſelf, and ſhe is very careful to diſtinguiſh when ſhe ought to ſet bounds to it: but I am angry with her, I confeſs, for being ſo extremely devout, notwithſtanding the great pains that is taken to cure her of this fault. *Letters from the Chevalier du Méré to the dutcheſs de Lesdiguieres: and in another to the Count de Sourdis:* I entreat you to ſalute Madame Scaron in my name. I hope ſhe will allow me this favour in your perſon, tho' ſhe has refuſed it to me in my own: but if ſhe condeſcends to permit it more than once, you will have uncommon addreſs.

that the moſt lively ſallies of it ſeemed to be only the natural effects of the gaiety of her heart.

Such was Madame Scaron, nor can it be thought ſurpriſing that it was difficult not to render her ſervices, and ſtill more ſo to render them with views wholly diſintereſted. The marchioneſs de Montchevreüil was moved to compaſſion at ſo many misfortunes joined with ſo much beauty and virtue. She ſnatched her from the dangers which madame Scaron was not apprehenſive of by offering her an aſylum with her.

Madame Scaron rather choſe to waſte her hours in the ſolitude of the country than to ſtay in Paris, and be adored by Villarceaux, or to marry the Chevalier de Méré, who pretended, that when ſhe was his ſcholar, ſhe had promiſed him to be his wife. She was ſo ſolicitous to pleaſe the Marchioneſs de Montchevreüil, that hearing her expreſs a great inclination to have a piece of tapeſtry made, ſhe roſe every morning at four o'clock to work at it: a neigbouring lady obſerving a window always open very early, and a woman with a needle in her hand, ſaid to madame de Montchevreüil: 'You have a very induſtrious chamber-maid.'

It was this eagerneſs to perform little ſervices for her friends, even to the forgetfulneſs of her own rank, that made it ſo confidently affirmed in twenty manuſcripts of that time, that ſhe had ſerved in the quality of a chamber-maid.

She never loſt ſight of the plan ſhe had formed to raiſe herſelf to a diſtinguiſhed condition, by acquiring a great reputation. To be remarkable, ſhe often deviated from common paths, and delighted in being ſingular in her conduct. In her opinion, it was a ſmall matter to be one of the moſt amiable perſons of her age, ſhe aſpired to be one of the moſt extraordinary. She carried to exceſs all the virtues of her own ſex, and endeavoured with the greateſt ardour to practiſe all that do honour to the other, without drawing upon herſelf the imputation of being romantick or a prude. The celebrated Ninon confined her ambition to the imitation of manly qualities. Madame Scaron valued

herſelf

herſelf upon being at once all that was moſt agreeable in the men, all that was moſt lovely in woman.

During a journey to Poictou whither ſhe went in company with ſeveral other perſons, one of the gentlemen was ſeized with the ſmall-pox. Madame Scaron did not remember to have had that diſtemper, however ſhe continued to inſpire the ſiſter of the ſick man with great apprehenſions for herſelf, and then went into his chamber, attended him aſſiduouſly, and never quitted him till he was quite recovered: to his grateful acknowledgments for the ſervice ſhe did him, ſhe anſwered,

'It was neither friendſhip, nor piety that procured 'you my attendance; it was at firſt a little compaſſion, 'and afterwards a great deſire to do a thing which no 'one ever did before.'

At a time when Emetick was conſidered as the laſt remedy, ſhe drank a large glaſs of it in full health. Her friends ſent her home immediately in great ſurprize at her folly, 'that was not what I wanted, ſaid ſhe 'afterwards. I expected they would have ſaid, that 'pretty woman has the courage and reſolution of a 'man: and this they did not ſay.'

She was very much mortified to find that her friends came to viſit her on holy Thurſday, ſince that was to ſuppoſe that ſhe did not pay a proper regard to the day. 'At that time, ſaid ſhe, I was not very devout, 'but I did not think a young woman ſhould appear 'indifferent about matters, which libertines affected to 'deſpiſe.' The friends of Scaron thought it not impoſſible to get reſtored to his widow, the penſion which he had enjoyed for three or four years, in the quality of the queen's patient, and which he had loſt for publiſhing the Mazarinade. But what claim could madame Scaron have to a penſion which had been ſuppreſt before her marriage? her poverty indeed was her only claim,

This was ſet forth in many affecting petitions; cardinal Mazarin having read one, aſked if the petitioner was in good health, and being anſwered in the affirmative.

mative. How then, replied he, is ſhe qualified to ſucceed to the penſion of a ſick man?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Of the ſuperintendant FOUQUET.

MONSIEUR FOUQUET was the only friend whom ſhe had not yet tried. It has been already obſerved, that he gave Scaron a penſion of ſixteen hundred livres.

It was not very honourable to be in the wages of the ſuperintendant. Vanity was his motive for giving penſions to men, and the love of intrigue for laviſhing preſents on women. Madame Scaron balanced a long time, before ſhe could reſolve to ſolicit him for the penſion he had allowed her huſband. Such a ſtep appeared to her as the laſt degree of abaſement. Her love of virtue, her nice ſenſe of honour, the plan ſhe had laid down to diſtinguiſh herſelf by an irreproachable conduct, all ſeemed wounded by an application to the ſuperintendant, but her friends prevailed upon her to ſubmit to it.

Accordingly ſhe waited upon Fouquet, but ſo meanly habited, that the perſon who was to preſent her to him, was aſhamed of her appearance. Madame Scaron had, in reality, no diſlike to dreſs, but it was the ſole employment of her ſex, and that was to her a ſufficient reaſon for ſeeming to deſpiſe it. She aſpired to thoſe praiſes which the devout court of the queen mother began now to give to a ſimplicity in dreſs, equipage and living: beſides, ſhe was already too much mortified by her own reflexions on the meanneſs of begging a penſion of a man who was profuſe in his benefactions, and who wanted virtue, to endeavour at ſucceeding by the force of her beauty.

Fouquet received her like a miniſter who was too buſy to give attention to thoſe modeſt charms which would have excited his love, or to that appearance of diſtreſs which would have moved his compaſſion. He gave

gave her fine promiſes, which he forgot as eaſily as thoſe, which through cuſtom, he gave every one elſe.

Some days afterwards, happening to caſt his eyes upon the memorial which ſhe had preſented to him, he recollected that Scaron had a handſome wife, whom he had ſometimes ſeen at Saint Mandé. While Colbert was contriving his ruin, Fouquet was employed in procuring new pleaſures, and thought of nothing but how to enjoy thoſe advantages his wealth and his power gave him. The deep diſtreſs ſet forth in this petition gave him hopes, which his imagination encreaſed.

He declared his deſigns to one of thoſe men whom the Great have always about them, either to apologize for their irregularities, or to ſerve their pleaſures. This man went, by his orders, to viſit madame Scaron, and told her that the ſuperintendant was moved with her misfortunes, but could not relieve them: that the number of penſioners was already too great to permit him to give the dangerous example of continuing penſions to widows: he added that the ſuperintendant indeed gave large ſums to ſeveral ladies, and even to ſome of the higheſt quality, but that he received ſervices from them, in return, which were a ſufficient recompence. 'If you will permit me, ma'dam, ſaid he, to ſpeak freely, I would adviſe you 'to procure the acquaintance and friendſhip of ſome 'of thoſe ladies who are ſupported by the benefacti'ons of monſieur Fouquet.'

This inſidious advice was calculated to make madame Scaron fall into the ſnare that was laid for her; the ſuperintendant had received her with too great indifference to give her any ſuſpicions that he had a deſign upon her, and ſhe diſmiſſed his ambaſſador with thanks.

Madame de Montigni, the creature, the agent, and the miſtreſs of the ſuperintendant, introduced herſelf into her acquaintance, and endeavoured to prevail upon her to wait upon him again. She exaggerated the merit of Fouquet, ſhe made ſage obſervations on the dangers that threatened poverty, ſhe declaimed againſt the vices it often was the cauſe of, ſhe painted

painted the happineſs of a widow who was independent, and, encouraged by the attention with which madame Scaron liſtened to her, ſhe ventured at laſt to ſpeak plainer; but madame Scaron anſwered with ſo much prudence, and diſcovered ſuch a calm, yet reſolute virtue, that madame de Montigni evaded, by tedious palliations, the contempt ſhe had ſo juſtly incurred.

Fouquet always thought himſelf ſecure of conqueſt; he uſed to calculate the worth of what was called virtue in women, and was ſo fully perſuaded, that even hearts might be purchaſed, that he preſumed to ſet a price upon that of mademoiſelle de Valliere. 'I have, 'ſaid he, all the treaſure of the kingdom in my poſ-'ſeſſion, and I know the rate of every woman's chaſ-'tity.' Difficulties only animated him to perſeverance, and reſiſtance increaſed his triumph.

Madame du Pleſſis-Belliere, more his friend than miſtreſs, heard with admiration the virtuous reſiſtance of madame Scaron. She complimented her upon it, exhorted her to continue it, and foretold to Fouquet that he would fail in his attempts upon her. Fouquet imagined he might be more ſucceſsful, if he attacked her with more force; he ſent her a diamond necklace of great value, madame Scaron neither knew, nor was able to gueſs from whom ſo rich a preſent came, and received it as the gift of providence.

Some days afterwards, madame de Montigni went to viſit her, ſhe admired the diamonds, and told her the ſuperintendant had made her that trifling preſent. Madame Scaron bluſhed, and, trembling for the conſequence, declared that ſhe would ſend them back to him immediately.

Madame de Montigni repreſented to her, that by doing ſo, ſhe would be guilty of an affront to the ſuperintendant, which he had not deſerved to meet with; that the preſent he had ſent her, was only an inſtance of his eſteem for her, and that it was his cuſtom to confer ſuch favours upon women of the moſt rigid virtue.

Madame

Madame Scaron, either through fear of offending a man in power, through credulity, or through weakneſs, yielded to her perſuaſions, and talked no more of returning the jewels. The next day ſhe went according to her promiſe to viſit madame de Montigni, and to her great aſtoniſhment, ſaw the ſuperintendant enter a few moments afterwards: ſhe was now abſolutely convinced that this meeting, which madame de Montigni aſſured her was owing merely to chance, had been concerted before, and that Fouquet came there in hopes of receiving the price of his jewels.

She left the houſe as precipitately as if it had been infected with the plague: when ſhe related this circumſtance afterwards, ſhe declared that ſhe never felt ſo ſincere a joy, as when ſhe returned thoſe diamonds by which Fouquet had dared to hope he ſhould obtain her.

The miniſter was informed, that marſhal Albret was better received by her than himſelf had been, his venal confidents took vengeance for the repulſe their benefactor had met with, by reporting publickly, that madame Scaron had an amour with that nobleman. Madame Scaron, alarmed by theſe ſlanders, left off viſiting at the hotel d'Albret for ſome months, notwithſtanding the ſtrong reaſons ſhe had to diſpenſe with this caution.

She often went to viſit mademoiſelle de l'Enclos, but marſhal Albret, and the duke de Bethune being with her every day, theſe innocent meetings were ſeverely cenſured, and ſhe found it neceſſary to give up Ninon alſo.

By this prudent conduct, ſhe put an end to thoſe reports ſo diſadvantageous to her character. Fouquet was at length convinced that the friendſhip between her and marſhal Albret was founded on eſteem, and free from guilt; he no longer hoped to make a venal purchaſe of a heart, which the marſhal could not gain by love, but he would not give her the penſion, which ſhe refuſed to deſerve.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Of VILLARÇEAUX.

HER virtue could not relieve her from diſtreſs; her fortitude was admired and praiſed, but her friends, who ſaw that ſhe was proof to every temptation, however artfully managed, began to be diſcouraged. Brancas was the only one who did not forſake her; he ſent her often very conſiderable preſents, but concealed the generous hand that beſtowed them. All the others were weary of ſerving a woman ſo inſenſible, and would have been pleaſed to revenge themſelves on her, by attributing her reſiſtance to prudery, but that in juſtice they could find no other fault with her than that of loving no one: A horrible fault * in the opinions of perſons whoſe ſervices and adorations tended only to correct it.

Villarçeaux becoming diſguſted with women of gallantry, who, notwithſtanding all his ſervices, had been the cauſe of his confinement in the Baſtile, returned to Madame Scaron more tender and paſſionate than ever. She treated him ſo harſhly, that madame de Villarçeaux, his wife, a woman remarkable for her extreme jealouſy, received her into the number of her moſt intimate friends

Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos, as ſincere and unalterable in friendſhip, as light and inconſtant in love, was extremely ſolicitous to engage Madame Scaron in an intimacy with her: this the other as carefully avoided, but without failing in the gratitude ſhe owed her.

'She was chaſte (ſaid mademoiſelle de l'Enclos, 'who always ſpoke as ſhe thought) but that was not 'ſo much the fault of her conſtitution, as the weak-'neſs of her mind. I endeavoured to cure her, but 'but ſhe feared God too much too profit by my leſſons. 'We quarrelled every day, and every day we were 'reconciled, but our hearts could never be thorough-'ly

* The chevalier de Méré's letters.

'ly united. If ſhe had followed my advice, ſhe 'would never have been raiſed to the rank in which 'you now ſee her, but ſhe would have been more 'happy.'

This ſpeech was very different from another which was attributed to her. 'I know nothing, I have ſeen 'nothing, but I have often lent my yellow chamber 'to her and Villarçeaux.'

Nothing is leſs certain, or ought ſo little to be depended on, as the reports of thoſe perſons who were intimate with mademoiſelle de l'Enclos. I was aſſured by one of them that the marchioneſs de V....r had a billet in her poſſeſſion, in which madame Scaron made an appointment with Villarçeaux in theſe words, *Come then, ſince it muſt be ſo: neceſſity has no law.* I ran eagerly to the Marchioneſs de V....r to be more fully informed of this circumſtance, being reſolved, if I found it true, to enrich theſe memoirs with it, tho' it were only to add to the marvellous, with which they abound; for it was ſtill more extrordinary for a woman of gallantry to be raiſed to the throne, than the widow of a poet: madame de V....r aſſured me that ſhe never had, nor had ever ſeen ſuch a billet. And that ſhe could not believe that any one, who, like her, had been acquainted with madame de Maintenon, could imagine her capable of writing any thing ſo infamous.

They added, that madame Scaron lived ſo long with the marquis de Villarçeaux, that the tower of the caſtle, where ſhe had an apartment, was called d'Aubigné's tower: however nothing is more certain, than that no tower of the caſtle of Villarçeaux was ever called by that name. Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos lived concealed there during three years, but would mademoiſelle de l'Enclos have been choſen for governeſs to the king's children? It may be anſwered that this choice was made by madame de Monteſpan; however it was the beſt ſhe could have made, vice always prefers virtue even to itſelf.

Theſe falſe and ſcandalous anecdotes are only ſnares, which malice and envy ſpread for credulity. It is

thus that they are conſidered by the philoſopher until he has well examined them. In his eyes the favourites of fortune appear as idols, to which ſome offer incenſe, and others cover with ordure. His juſtice degrades thoſe whom flattery has too much exalted, and his compaſſion exalts thoſe whom envy and hatred have depreſt.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Madame SCARON *obtains a penſion from the Queen-mother.*

MADAME Scaron's friends began now to deſpair of ever procuring her a ſolid eſtabliſhment, when the queen-mother happening one day to mention Scaron, the Baron de la Garde ſeized that favourable moment to repreſent to her, that that celebrated Valetudinarian, whom ſhe had honoured with her bounty, had left a widow young and beautiful, whoſe virtue had a long time ſtruggled againſt the rage of calamity, and was therefore worthy of her majeſty's compaſſion.

The Baron de la Garde found his requeſt ſupported with ardour; almoſt all that were preſent, entreated the queen to continue, to the deſerving widow, the penſion her huſband had juſtly loſt by the licentiouſneſs of his pen.

Theſe ſolicitations were ſo preſſing, and ſo ſeaſonably urged, that the queen aſked what the penſion had been; ſome body replied two thouſand livres, tho' in reality it was no more than fifteen hundred; the queen ordered it to be reſtored, and ſent her the firſt quarter immediately.

Madame Scaron went to Val-de-grace, to return thanks to the queen-mother. There was no perſon in the court who did not pretend to have had ſome ſhare in procuring her the penſion. 'The gratitude, ſaid 'ſhe to mademoiſelle de Pons, which I expreſs to thoſe 'to whom I do not owe this benefit, is a robbery that 'I commit againſt thoſe to whom I am really obliged 'for it.

While all were eager to congratulate her on her good

good fortune, madame de... * who was not able to imagine how a woman could have ſo many friends, without having as many lovers, ſaid aloud; 'If the 'queen had reſolved to give a penſion to the fineſt 'eyes, and the greateſt coquet in Paris, ſhe could not 'have made a better choice.'

Madame Scaron heard theſe words, and they deſtroyed all her ſatisfaction; the praiſes that were beſtowed on her eyes, could not compenſate for the injury done to her character. This injury and cruel cenſure affected her ſo deeply, that ſhe conceived an implacable hatred againſt the lady who was guilty of it. 'The only one, ſaid ſhe, whom I ever hated.' But ſuch was the force of this paſſion upon a heart, till then, always upon its guard againſt violent emotions, that ſhe was ſeized with a ſudden illneſs whenever ſhe ſaw her, heard her named, or paſſed by her houſe. It was upon this occaſion that her confeſſors ſaid to her, 'this hatred, madam, will ruin your ſal-'vation.'

As ſoon as ſhe became a favourite at court, ſhe took a noble revenge on this lady; ſhe did her a ſervice of great importance, but hated her no leſs than ever: this circumſtance ſhe related to madame de Glapion at Saint-Cyr, at a time when the auſterity of her devotion, and the high degree of grandeur, to which ſhe was raiſed, might have ſuppreſt every thing that could have recalled to her remembrance any of her paſt weakneſſes.

This ſarcaſm giving her a diſguſt to publick life, in which however it was always her lot to be, without ever being able to reconcile herſelf to it, ſhe retired to the convent of the Urſelines in Saint James's-Street, where ſhe ſubſiſted at little expence, and reſigned herſelf wholly up to her growing inclination for exerciſes of piety. She gave the fourth part of her penſion to the poor, 'to expiate, ſaid ſhe, the 'officious falſhood that procured it.' She was re-

* In the manuſcript I have before me, the name of this lady is blotted out.

markably neat in her perſon, her dreſs was always choſen with the greateſt regard to ſimplicity.

Marſhal d'Albret, the moſt zealous of all her Friends, introduced her to his lady, and formed a ſtrict friendſhip between them, which ſufficiently proves the eſteem he had for her. In thoſe times it was not uſual for a huſband to preſent his miſtreſs to his wife, and even in our own, a virtuous woman is never the friend of one who is not ſo.

Madame d'Albret, reſtleſs, unquiet, overwhelmed with languor in the midſt of all thoſe enjoyments which rank and fortune procure, was continually employed in making chaplets and pompons: madame Scaron was pleaſed with her ſingularity of temper, and uſed her utmoſt endeavours to acquire her eſteem. She often quitted her convent to make viſits at the hotel d'Albret, and was the delight of all the company that reſorted thither. Mademoiſelle de Pons, and mademoiſelle de Martel, both related to monſieur d'Albret, both extremely amiable tho' of very different diſpoſitions, agreed in nothing but their fondneſs for madame Scaron.

Madame de Richelieu and madame de Monteſpan ſupped at the hotel d'Albret almoſt every night. It was their favourite amuſement to make occaſional verſes; madame de Richelieu made couplets againſt madame de Montauzier; madame de Monteſpan, made epigrams againſt the dutcheſs de la Valliere. They ſometimes compared each other to flowers or trades.

The abbé Têtu, piqued by madame Scaron's having compared him to ſomething which ridiculed his fondneſs for news, which he carried to an extravagant degree, he compared her to a jailer. The fair jailer made the following verſes.

Ah! l'ingrat, le maudit métier,
Que le métier de geoliere!
Il faut être barbare & fiere:
Il faut faire enrager un pauvre priſonnier.
Non: ce n'eſt pas là ma maniere.

Tous

Tous ceux qui ſont dans mes liens,
D'eux-mêmes ſont venus s'y rendre.
Je n'ai pas cherché les moïens,
De leur plaire ou de les ſurprendre.
Priſon ou liberté, je leur donne à choiſir,
Je le dis donc, ſans être vaine:
Je prends mes captifs ſans plaiſir,
Et je ſai les garder ſans peine.

'Ah curſed jailer trade,
'Where all the brute muſt aid
'To make a pris'ner mad!
'No: that was ne'er my way.
'The ſlaves that own my ſway,
'Have choſe the chains they had.

'Diſdaining all decoy,
'I ſay it, nor am vain;
'I catch them without joy,
'And guard them without pain.

ELPHINSTON.

Madame de Richelieu, compared to a ſhop-keeper, theſe:

La marchande au palais ſe pique
D'avoir tout du plus beau chez ſoi.
Moi, je n'étale rien. Mais mon je ne ſais quoi,
Fait qu'on accourt à ma boutique.

'The trading dame will boaſt
'Of having all that's fine;
'In hopes to make the moſt:
'But no ſuch art is mine.

'No trumpery I've got,
'The paſſing eye to ſtop:
'But my—I know not what,
'Accuſtoms thus my ſhop.

ELPHINSTON.

Mademoiſelle d'Aumale, afterwards lady to the marſhal de Schomberg, compared to a tinker, wrote this ſtanza, ſuitable enough to the coldneſs and reſerve of her temper.

Le métier que jefais eſt aſſez difficile,
Et ne rapporte que très peu.
Je ſoude aſſurément en fort honnête fille :
Mais on ne peut ſouder ſans feu.

'My trade is hard, no doubt,
'Nor claims an ample hire :
'Full honeſtly I clout,
'But cannot without fire.

ELPHINSTON.

Madame Scaron ſhone particularly in thoſe paſtimes that required verſes. This facility of hers ſpoke her pupil to a poet; their elegance to a better than Scaron. The following ſhe compoſed upon a party of pleaſure, which afforded no other than that of promiſing a great deal.

Six perſonnes brûlant du deſir de ſe voir,
Après s'être cherchés ſe trouverent un ſoir
Dans un bois ſombre & ſolitaire.
Que leur plaiſir fut grand ! il paſſa leur eſpoir :
Mais après les tranſports du ſalut ordinaire,
Ils ne ſurent que dire & ne ſurent que faire.

'Six perſons burnt to meet,
'And meet they did at laſt,
'All in a lone retreat :
'Enjoyment hope ſurpaſt.
'But the firſt tranſports o'er, they knew
'Nor what to ſay, nor what to do.

ELPHINSTON.

For the abbé Têtu ſhe made this epitaph.

Cy gît un abbé froid & ſec,
Dont la vigueur fut endormie.
Dans les derniers tems de ſa vie,
Il ne lui reſtoit que le bec,
Dont il bequetoit ſon amie.

'A ſnarling abbot lies here-under,
'Whoſe character may waken wonder :

'In

'In latter moments of his life,
'Tho' he could never boaſt a wife,
'When nought remain'd him but his bill,
'He peck'd a friend, a female ſtill.

ELPHINSTON.

And this for the duke of Richelieu.

Cy gît Armand: l'Amour, pour faire piece aux ballets,
Lui donna ſon ſouris, ſon caquet, & ſes ailes.

'Here lies Armand, to whom, for female ſtings,
'Love lent his ſmile, his prattle, and his wings.

ELPHINSTON.

Some of the company that uſed to meet at the hôtel d'Albret, having ſeen in a village the ſign of a Magdalen that reſembled the abbé Têtu, madame Scaron produced theſe ſtanza's:

Eſt-ce pour flater ma peine,
Que dans un vieux cabaret
Croyant voir la Madeleine,
Je trouve votre portrait?

La marque d'amour me touche,
J'en aime la nouveauté:
On vous a fait femme & louche,
Sans nuire à la vérité.

'Is it then to ſoothe my pain,
'That thy portrait meets my eye,
'Magdalene no more in chain,
'To invite the paſſers by?

'Loving glances muſt endear:
'I am fond of what's ſo new.
'Thou haſt got a female leer,
'Nor in this offend'ſt the true.

ELPHINSTON.

One may judge by theſe little occaſional pieces, that ſhe would have equalled Deſhoulieres, if devotion, that bane of all agreeable talents, had not made her renounce poetry. She often ſaid afterwards, that that period of her life was the happieſt ſhe had ever known.

Madame de Chalais, afterwards princeſs of Urſins, was a frequent viſitor at the hotel d'Albret. She conceived a great friendſhip for madame Scaron, and their correſpondence continued till her death. The company that compoſed madame d'Albret's aſſembly were all jealous of the ſuperior wit of the princeſs of Urſins; her extreme haughtineſs diſguſted them, and they would ſubmit to receive advice from no one but madame Scaron, who gave it them with great freedom, but accompanied it with nothing humiliating.

'The princeſs of Urſins, ſaid madame Scaron afterwards*, was jealous of the diſtinction ſhewn me, when I was choſen from among all the company for a private converſation on affairs of importance. I ſhould have been better pleaſed to be in her place, that I might have diverted myſelf; ſo that neither of us was ſatisfied, for I loved amuſement, and ſhe was fond of caballing: however my vanity was ſoothed by the favourable opinion they entertained of me, my frankneſs pleaſed, and my judgment had ſome weight with them. But they were afraid of the deep penetration of the princeſs of Urſins, and I readily ſacrificed my pleaſures to this preference, for I have always had the happineſs to love ſolid advantages, and the misfortune of being maintained in thoſe that were chimerical.'

The count de Giche, the abbé d'Aumont, the marquis de la Feuillade, Bellefonds, Buſſy, Beuvron, Barillon, Vardes, Rouville, Saint Luc, and the chevalier Grammont, were thoſe who moſt admired, and were moſt ſolicitous to pleaſe her. They could not prevail upon her to quit her convent; ſhe ſhewed herſelf in the world without having any deſigns of making her fortune in it; ſhe was regretted by it, tho' ſhe left it without regret for the calm pleaſures of a retired life.

The number of her friends increaſed every day, and ſo general was the admiration ſhe inſpired, that the ladies d'Albret and de Richelieu, who tho' no longer of an age, yet had ſtill the deſire of pleaſing, grew

* Manuſcript of mademoiſelle d'Aumale.

grew jealous of her. They were extremely mortified to find that they could not excite reſpect, while madame Scaron drew all the adoration: ſhe perceived their diſguſt, and to remove it, went to paſs a few weeks at Montchevreuil, 'where, ſays mademoiſelle 'd'Aumale in her memoirs, *they certainly ſerved God* 'with ſincerity.' Here ſhe became acquainted with madame de Brinon. At her return ſhe omitted nothing which ſhe thought likely to make her ſuperiority be forgot.

She, at length, accepted of an apartment at the hotel d'Albret, where a maſon foretold her future greatneſs. This fact is really true, without having any thing ſupernatural in it, which by weak minds has been ſo readily admitted.

The name of the maſon was Barbé; he was a dabler in judicial aſtrology: having often occaſion to go to Scaron's, he ſaw his wife, and ſtruck, with her noble air and the majeſty of her countenance, he one day ſaid, 'ſhe is now the wife of a cripple, but 'I 'am ſure ſhe is born to be a queen.'

He repeated this ſo often, that he thought he read in the ſtars all that a heated imagination ſuggeſted to him: happening to be at work in the hotel d'Albret, when madame Scaron was there, he came into her apartment, and with an oraculous air, and tone of voice, he ſpoke thus to her:

'You will after many troubles, and many difficul-'ties, be raiſed to a heighth you little expect to reach, 'a king will love you, and you ſhall reign, but you 'ſhall never poſſeſs great riches.'

'To this prophecy he added ſeveral remarkable circumſtances, which both diverted and aſtoniſhed her. Not all her good ſenſe, and the contempt ſhe had for ſo fallible a ſcience, could hinder her from feeling a little emotion, which ſhewed itſelf in her looks, and drew upon her the railleries of her friends. 'Ah, la-'dies, ſaid the maſon, you would do better to pay her 'homage than to laugh at her.'

When this prediction was accompliſhed, we enquired for Barbé, he was dead, but ſhe conferred many benefits

neſts on his family: mademoiſelle d'Aumale, reading to her one day, the life of the chevalier Bayard, when ſhe came to that paſſage where he is told by an aſtrologer, that he would be advanced to a greater heighth than any ſubject could hope to attain to, but that his riches would not be proportioned to his elevation, 'I 'reſemble him in his fortune, ſaid madame de Main-'tenon, and Barbé made me the ſame prediction.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Madame Scaron *refuſes a huſband, and loſes her penſion.*

IT was not the marquis de C.... x's fault that the oracle did not prove falſe: This nobleman was very rich, but had lived in a courſe of extreme libertiniſm. He began to take a diſtaſte to the world, becauſe he grew old; to have an averſion to ſhews and amuſements, becauſe his legs could hardly ſupport him; and made likewiſe reflections upon the folly and dangers of luxury, becauſe his ſtomack was now incapable of digeſtion. Fully reſolved to quit that plan of life he had hitherto followed, all he wanted was a wife, to make his new one agreeable: and to ſpare himſelf the fatigues of treaties, and the mortification of refuſals, he caſt his eyes upon madame Scaron: Madame d'Albret engaged in his intereſts, and propoſed him to madame Scaron for a huſband, being perſuaded that the diſtreſſed widow, would receive the offer with the higheſt gratitude.

Madame Scaron could not promiſe herſelf much happineſs in being the wife of an old debauchee: ſhe told madame d'Albret that ſhe could not like the man, his manners were diſagreeable, he wanted virtue, he had no religion, his underſtanding was weak, and his temper violent, and that ſhe ſhould always prefer a happy medium to get riches, with uneaſineſſes ſtill greater.

Madame d'Albret repreſented to her, that the marquis de C....x was a man of quality, and had wit enough

enough to be ſenſible of the ſuperiority of hers, and to ſubmit to her inclinations. Madame Scaron replied, that birth without merit had no weight with her, and that a man who could ſuffer himſelf to be governed by his wife, muſt needs be very contemptible.

Madame d'Albret was piqued at a refuſal ſhe ſo little expected, in the firſt emotions of her anger, ſome ſevere expreſſions eſcaped her; ſhe accuſed madame Scaron with pride and inſolence, ſaid, ſhe had been ſpoiled by the notice that was taken of her, that ſhe had not always had ſo much delicacy, but could ſubmit to be the wife of a burleſque poet.

Madame Scaron was greatly affected with this reproach, ſhe could not refrain from tears, either, becauſe the name and memory of her huſband were ſtill dear to her, or, that her pride was wounded to find it ſtill remembered, that ſhe had been the wife of Scaron, notwithſtanding all ſhe had done and ſuffered to make it be forgot. The dutcheſs de Richelieu reconciled them, the marquis de C . . . x had an abſolute refuſal and dropt his purſuit, which was as great a proof of the contempt he had for himſelf, as his eſteem for madame Scaron.

The queen mother died, madame Scaron loſt her penſion, and the marquis de C . . . x renewed his addreſſes. Circumſtances ſeemed to favour him, but he was more hated than ever. In vain he hoped, that an alteration in her fortune would produce a change in her heart. Madame Scaron was always firm in her reſolutions, when ſhe thought them juſt. She was not diſcouraged by the ſituation to which ſhe found herſelf reduced, nor, dazzled by that which was offered her: ſhe told Madame d'Albret that ſhe would not be the ſlave of a man, whoſe wife ſhe had refuſed to be. Her friends now looked upon her as an obſtinate woman, who did not deſerve their kindneſs, ſince ſhe diſdained ſo ſhining a fortune. Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos was the only one who applauded her for her firmneſs, 'That woman, ſaid ſhe, is of more 'value than all the marquiſſes in France.' No one

that

that had not an underſtanding, as good as Ninon's, could be of this opinion.

Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos entertained hopes, that poverty, would, at length, give up madame Scaron to her perſuaſions: ſhe offered her her houſe and her table: madame Scaron was too jealous of her fame to accept this aſylum.

The ſociety of Ninon was not compatible with her character, nor with her views. At her houſe ſhe would have found adorers, and ſhe was weary of them; ſhe would have ſeen Villarçeaux, and ſhe could not hear him named without emotion; ſhe would have met with deiſts, and God only was her hope. She therefore contented herſelf with ſeeing mademoiſelle de l'Enclos from time to time, avoided an intimacy without breaking with her intirely: too grateful not to love her, too delicate to aſſociate with her, too wiſe to contemn her fine qualities, too virtuous to approve her conduct. Her diſtreſt circumſtances obliged her to retire to the convent of the hoſpital nuns in the Fauxbourg Saint Marceau. Yet the author of the life of Ninon de l'Enclos, written upon the reports of the abbé de Chateauneuf and Voltaire ſays, that madame Scaron, and that lady, had, for a long time, but one bed: a ridiculous aſſertion, mademoiſelle de l'Enclos was not accuſtomed to divide her bed with women.

Let us leave madame Scaron overwhelmed with languor in her convent, reading books that were recommended to her by the abbé Tetu, ſtruggling to be devout, lamenting the loſs of her penſion, and amuſing herſelf with teaching mademoiſelle Balbien to read, and take a view of what paſſed in that court where ſhe was one day to reign, and of the many hearts which Lewis XIV tried, before he found one worthy his own.

And here it is neceſſary that I ſhould aſk pardon of my readers for this light part of my hiſtory. When we are in the country of triflers, we muſt ſpeak their language. The Journaliſts of Trevoux would condemn ſuch a digreſſion, but at the time that I write, the title of my work juſtifies it: and no one will venture to affirm

affirm that facts, if true, tho' ſcandalous, are not to be related. The lives of ſinners may afford as uſeful leſſons to the world, as thoſe of ſaints. For example, what can be more inſtructive than the hiſtory of the Popes?

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The firſt amours of LEWIS XIV.

IT was not neceſſary that Lewis ſhould be amiable and tender to be beloved, his high rank wanted no additional charms; but heaven, that decreed every thing ſhould be extraordinary in a man whoſe power was to change the face of the univerſe, joined to the luſtre of a crown, all the graces of perſon: his air was languiſhing, yet full of dignity; his manners noble, yet ſoft and inſinuating, and he had that ſenſibility of heart which ſecured his ſucceſs in love, and made up all the charms of it.

Madame de Beauvais, * firſt woman of the bed-chamber to the queen, engaged his earlieſt notice: this inclination was repreſt by Anne of Auſtria and Lewis, while very young, was taught to love with ardor, by the difficulties he met with in his firſt amour.

Mademoiſelle d'Argencourt, maid of honour to the queen-mother, was very handſome, very ſubtile, full of tenderneſs, and reſiſtleſs languor; ſhe was deſirous of being beloved by the king, and ſhe ſucceeded in her wiſhes, but ſhe was at the ſame time beloved by Chamarante, firſt valet de chambre to the king.

Chamarante was one of the handſomeſt men in the court, and was more likely to charm a licentious beauty, who loved, becauſe ſhe muſt have ſomething to love, than a young monarch to whom nature whiſpered that there were pleaſures which his age did not permit him to taſte.

The pride of mademoiſelle d'Argencourt was flattered at ſeeing her maſter at her feet, her rigour ſtrength-

* The marquis de Richelieu married her daughter,

ſtrengthened his chains: ſhe permitted him to ſigh for her, but obliged him to reſtrain his paſſion within the bounds of reſpect. This appearance of virtue gained her the eſteem of the queen-mother, while, with her lover, ſhe ſecretly made herſelf amends for the practice of ſo painful a duty.

Lewis ſuſpected that he had a concealed rival, but could not imagine that mademoiſelle d'Argencourt was capable of uniting the extremes of virtue and libertiniſm, by a contraſt ſo injurious: he cauſed his miſtreſs to be carefully watched, and ſoon diſcovered that ſhe was unfaithful. Coming from maſs one day, the king's nurſe found a letter in the great hall of the palace of Fontainbleau, which ſhe carried immediately to the queen-mother: the king was preſent, he read it, it was a paſſionate billet, and it was not to him.

This diſcovery occaſioned great confuſion among the maids of honour: du Fouilloux accuſed mademoiſelle de la Motte, ſhe cleared herſelf; the examination went round, and at length all the ſuſpicions centered on mademoiſelle d'Argencourt. Lewis was ſtill ignorant of the name and quality of his rival, he ſuſpected the marquis de Richelieu: the queen-mother would not allow him this poor conſolation, and Lewis learned, with ſurprize, with ſhame, and grief, that the happy rival who had been preferred to him, was one of his valets. Mademoiſelle d'Argencourt was forgot, and Chamarante was puniſhed only by a look. A remarkable inſtance of moderation, at a time when a powerful ſubject made a huſband tremble, whoſe wife he had taken away by force, and this huſband obliged to fly from the rage of a man undeſervedly great, while the republick approved of his fears and precautions. A private man may ſtoop to revenge, but a king of France ſhould pardon.

It was with difficulty that Lewis could eraſe the unfavourable impreſſion which this adventure gave him againſt all women. He ſuſpected them, he diſtruſted his own power of pleaſing, he could not be ſure of being loved independent of his crown, and yet without that certainty, love can give no real happineſs

to

to a king. The remembrance of the preference given to his valet de chambre poiſoned all his pleaſures.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Of Cardinal Mazarine's *Nieces.*

CARDINAL Mazarine ſent for his nieces from Italy, that he might confirm his authority by the great matches he expected to procure for them. They all had wit, and ſoon became the chief ornaments of the court. To that noble gallantry, which Anne of Auſtria had brought with her from Spain, they joined the vivacity, the little arts, and the refinements of coquetry, which agreed well with thoſe eaſy manners, delicacy of taſte, and decent freedom, that were already eſtabliſhed in France.

Lewis addreſt his vows to the eldeſt of thoſe ladies, but he had not time to be happy. Mazarine broke off this correſpondence, by marrying her to the count de Soiſſons, father of prince Eugene. The two lovers however had ſome private meetings at the hotel de Soiſſons, and thoſe ſufficiently tender.

The king was ſeized with a dangerous illneſs, and the duke of Orleans, his brother, had ſoon a numerous court. The women entertained hopes of governing him, but he had found ſo little happineſs in his commerce with the princeſs Palatine, who firſt undertook to inſpire him with the paſſion of love, that he reſolved, for the future, to make men his favourites. *

The count of Guiche, nearly of the ſame age with the duke of Orleans, handſome, well made, of an intriguing and dangerous ſpirit, firſt poſſeſſed his eſteem. The chevalier de Loraine completed his ſeduction. While the king's diſtemper continued, madame de Soiſſons ſent frequent meſſages to know how he did. Maria Mancini, her ſiſter, alſo went herſelf to enquire after

* Memoirs of Montpenſier. Vol. IV. p. 95.

after his health. One expected the death of her lover with a fortitude which bordered upon indifference, the other dreaded it, as the greateſt affliction, and wept exceſſively. The ſick prince diſcovered the different ſentiments of the two ſiſters, and loved her by whom he was moſt beloved.

Maria Mancini, afterwards married to the conſtable Colonne, was not beautiful, but had ſo many inevitable graces, that it was not perceived that ſhe had ſmall eyes, a large mouth, and a pale complexion. There was an elegance in her looks and motions, an air of ſimplicity in her manners, that captivated the affection; in her underſtanding that force and ſolidity, and that haughtineſs of temper ſo dangerous in the miſtreſſes of kings, when not ſoftened by the amiable weakneſſes of love. Lewis willingly received her fetters, his heart was ſtill free, but ſighed after ſo ſweet a ſlavery.

The Cardinal pretended to diſapprove of this paſſion, tho' he ſecretly rejoyced at it, becauſe it left all the authority in his hands: he uſed his utmoſt endeavours to ſtrengthen its force, yet the queen mother was not alarmed; ſhe conceived that uglineſs muſt neceſſarily inſpire diſguſt, and knew not that the eye may be palled with beauty, but that the charms of wit are always new. She was deſirous that the king ſhould not ſeek for amuſement in the company of any woman but Maria Mancini: but was not ſo imprudently ſevere as to deprive of his pleaſures, a ſon for whom ſhe had ſo great a deference and reſpect, as to decide once for all, that in every diſpute which might happen between the king and his brother the duke of Anjou, whom notwithſtanding ſhe loved with the greateſt tenderneſs, that the duke would be always in the fault.

Her ſpies aſſured her, that the king and Mademoiſelle de Mancini paſſed in reading poetry and romances thoſe hours which other lovers would have employed in furniſhing ſubjects for them. Maria Mancini taught the king Italian; ſhe taught him to feel, to reflect, and contributed more to form his mind, then all his preceptors: ſo great a maſter is love.

Inſenſibly

Inſenſibly their paſſion increaſed with their knowledge of each other's merit, and madame de Venelle made a diſcovery, that convinced the queen mother, it was not longer ſafe to ſuffer their private interviews. Cardinal Mazarine was ſolicitous to ſtifle theſe flames, either becauſe they oppoſed his deſigns, or that he had conceived an averſion to his niece, or probably becauſe he was willing to pleaſe the queen-mother, and conſole her by this ſmall ſacrifice for the little ſhare he allowed her in the government.

He laid an injunction on the lovers to ſee each other no more in private, which only increaſed their deſire to meet. What was at firſt but an innocent tenderneſs on the king's ſide, and a principle of coquetry on that of Maria Mancini, became an impetuous paſſion, which was ſtrengthened by oppoſition. Mancini had too much wit not to love intrigues, Lewis had too much power to be capable of obedience. They contrived to procure private interviews, in which they wept, complained, and vowed unalterable love. The queen mother was offended, the old Italian chid his niece ſeverely, the haughty niece did not alter her conduct, and the king conſoled her for reproaches, which ſhe again incurred to be again conſoled.

Cardinal Mazarine ſuffered him to languiſh in inactivity; and enervated with pleaſures a Prince who was born for the buſineſs of a ſtate, and for glory acquired by labour: this the ſerious turn of his mind, the loftineſs of his air ſeemed to indicate. He was not ſuffered to have any part in the adminiſtration, he therefore made an important affair of his amours.

Maria Mancini, impatient of a yoke, eager to rule, often reproached him for allowing himſelf to be governed by that uncle of hers, ſo much hated by his own relations, ſo odious to all France. Aſhamed to ſee a king whom ſhe loved under the tuition of his mother and his miniſter, ſhe repreſented to him, that it was their deſign to lengthen out his minority, and to uſe him always as a child. She told him that it was now time for him to reign, and that ſhe would love the laborious maſter a thouſand times more than the indolent

after his health. One expected the death of her lover with a fortitude which bordered upon indifference, the other dreaded it, as the greateſt affliction, and wept exceſſively. The ſick prince diſcovered the different ſentiments of the two ſiſters, and loved her by whom he was moſt beloved.

Maria Mancini, afterwards married to the conſtable Colonne, was not beautiful, but had ſo many inevitable graces, that it was not perceived that ſhe had ſmall eyes, a large mouth, and a pale complexion. There was an elegance in her looks and motions, an air of ſimplicity in her manners, that captivated the affection; in her underſtanding that force and ſolidity, and that haughtineſs of temper ſo dangerous in the miſtreſſes of kings, when not ſoftened by the amiable weakneſſes of love. Lewis willingly received her fetters, his heart was ſtill free, but ſighed after ſo ſweet a ſlavery.

The Cardinal pretended to diſapprove of this paſſion, tho' he ſecretly rejoyced at it, becauſe it left all the authority in his hands: he uſed his utmoſt endeavours to ſtrengthen its force, yet the queen mother was not alarmed; ſhe conceived that uglineſs muſt neceſſarily inſpire diſguſt, and knew not that the eye may be palled with beauty, but that the charms of wit are always new. She was deſirous that the king ſhould not ſeek for amuſement in the company of any woman but Maria Mancini: but was not ſo imprudently ſevere as to deprive of his pleaſures, a ſon for whom ſhe had ſo great a deference and reſpect, as to decide once for all, that in every diſpute which might happen between the king and his brother the duke of Anjou, whom notwithſtanding ſhe loved with the greateſt tenderneſs, that the duke would be always in the fault.

Her ſpies aſſured her, that the king and Mademoiſelle de Mancini paſſed in reading poetry and romances thoſe hours which other lovers would have employed in furniſhing ſubjects for them. Maria Mancini taught the king Italian; ſhe taught him to feel, to reflect, and contributed more to form his mind, then all his preceptors: ſo great a maſter is love.

Inſenſibly

Inſenſibly their paſſion increaſed with their knowledge of each other's merit, and madame de Venelle made a diſcovery, that convinced the queen mother, it was not longer ſafe to ſuffer their private interviews. Cardinal Mazarine was ſolicitous to ſtifle theſe flames, either becauſe they oppoſed his deſigns, or that he had conceived an averſion to his niece, or probably becauſe he was willing to pleaſe the queen-mother, and conſole her by this ſmall ſacrifice for the little ſhare he allowed her in the government.

He laid an injunction on the lovers to ſee each other no more in private, which only increaſed their deſire to meet. What was at firſt but an innocent tenderneſs on the king's ſide, and a principle of coquetry on that of Maria Mancini, became an impetuous paſſion, which was ſtrengthened by oppoſition. Mancini had too much wit not to love intrigues, Lewis had too much power to be capable of obedience. They contrived to procure private interviews, in which they wept, complained, and vowed unalterable love. The queen mother was offended, the old Italian chid his niece ſeverely, the haughty niece did not alter her conduct, and the king conſoled her for reproaches, which ſhe again incurred to be again conſoled.

Cardinal Mazarine ſuffered him to languiſh in inactivity; and enervated with pleaſures a Prince who was born for the buſineſs of a ſtate, and for glory acquired by labour: this the ſerious turn of his mind, the loftineſs of his air ſeemed to indicate. He was not ſuffered to have any part in the adminiſtration, he therefore made an important affair of his amours.

Maria Mancini, impatient of a yoke, eager to rule, often reproached him for allowing himſelf to be governed by that uncle of hers, ſo much hated by his own relations, ſo odious to all France. Aſhamed to ſee a king whom ſhe loved under the tuition of his mother and his miniſter, ſhe repreſented to him, that it was their deſign to lengthen out his minority, and to uſe him always as a child. She told him that it was now time for him to reign, and that ſhe would love the laborious maſter a thouſand times more than the indolent

indolent ſlave. 'Why do you not make uſe of your 'power? ſaid ſhe. Why do you, who can make all 'Europe tremble, live in ſubjection to a prieſt? One 'ſtroke of authority would cover you with glory: it 'is love that has made me your ſubject, but you who 'can ſubmit to obey, are not worthy of me. I love 'you with ardour, but I love your glory ſtill more. 'Had I ſtaid in Italy, I ſhould not have had the mor-'tification to ſee my lover, in every thing oppoſed, 'in every thing reſtrained.'

Thus did love awaken in Lewis that magnanimity which diſdains dependance, and this paſſion firſt taught him that firmneſs with which he afterwards guided the helm of government: who reigns a moment, reigns always.

The more than maſculine ſpirit of the niece made the uncle odious, while the artifices of the uncle, inſtead of ruining the niece, rendered her ſtill dearer.

Lewis, in a tender moment, promiſed Mancini that he would marry her. Theſe moments often returned, and this oath was a thouſand times repeated. Mademoiſelle de Mancini had almoſt procured the baniſhment of the cardinal; in that caſe the poſt of a prime miniſter would not have been given to any other: France would have been governed by two children, and France probably would have been the better for it.

Cardinal Mazarine did not foreſee that this paſſion would be carried to ſuch a heighth. He trembled for the honour of his niece, while he ſeemed only ſolicitous for the glory of his king. Yet it was with a ſecret pleaſure that he ſaw this marriage was not impoſſible. The queen mother gueſſed his ambitious views; and one day when he attempted to ſound her inclination, with regard to the marriage, ſhe ſaid to him with great emotion, 'If my ſon ſhould ever be capable of 'thus debaſing his blood, I would put myſelf at the 'head of all the orders of the ſtate, to revenge the 'violated honour of the royal family.'*

Mazarine,

* See the memoirs of madame de Motteville: this cir-

Mazarine, who ſhrunk beneath the glance of offended majeſty, trembled at theſe words. This miniſter might have taken a cruel revenge of France, by whom he was deteſted, and whoſe money only he loved, and of the king whoſe power he uſurped, by giving him a queen out of his own family; but he had not courage enough for ſuch an enterprize, his ſordid avarice filled him with perpetual inquietudes, and on this occaſion ſtifled the voice of ambition. Cardinal Richelieu would not have heſitated to place his niece upon the throne, had ſuch an opportunity offered. Stimulated even by the boldneſs of the attempt, and by the grandeur that muſt neceſſarily attend its ſucceſs, he would have filled up the immenſe ſpace which is between the monarch and his ſubject.

Mazarine, intimidated by the complaints of the queen, by the murmurs of the princes, and the exclamations of the whole court, was reſolved to make a merit of what, to his little ſoul, was a neceſſity. He ſent away his nieces, the king wept, complained, threatened, embraced his knees, called him father, all was fruitleſs. It was at this ſeparation, that mademoiſelle de Mancini ſaid thoſe words to Lewis which ſignify ſo much, and which Racine has ſo happily introduced in his Britannicus. 'Sire, you are a king, 'you weep and I depart.'

Lewis, when ſeparated from his miſtreſs, felt all the force of his paſſion; he would not liſten to the queen's remonſtrances, he would not ſuffer his marriage to be mentioned. The queen mother was obliged to intreat the cardinal to ſend for Maria Marcini from Brouage. The king conſented to go to Lyons to ſee the princeſs Margaret of Savoy, provided mademoiſelle de Mancini accompanied him in this journey.

The princeſs of Savoy came into the heart of France, to preſent a form that could not pleaſe, to ſuffer an ambiguous refuſal, to give jealouſy to Spain, and mirth to the princeſs de Montpenſier. As ſoon as mademoiſelle

---

circumſtance is alſo related in other memoirs of that time.

ſelle de Mancini perceived the princeſs of Savoy, ſhe ſaid, to the king. 'Do you not bluſh at coming ſo 'far for ſo ugly a woman?'

The princeſs of Savoy finding that the artifices of Mancini, and the propoſals made by Pignatelli would exclude her from the throne of France, was reſolved to give at leaſt an idea of what ſhe would have done, if ſhe had been placed there. 'If I was queen, ſaid 'ſhe, to the princeſs de Montpenſier, my huſband 'ſhould remove every one who had the misfor-'tune to diſpleaſe me. I would not be loved without 'reward, nor offended with impunity. Oh heavens! 'cried the princeſs de Montpenſier, exceſſively fright-'ened, what would you ſay, what would you do, if 'power was in your hands?'*

The infanta of Spain, ſo often propoſed without deſign, was at length ſeriouſly offered as the means of reconciling the two crowns.

The king would not accept her, the court of Savoy left Lyons with a conditional promiſe of marriage. Mazarine, now ſure of his influence, entered into a negotiation with Spain. By degrees the king's eyes were opened. Abſence which cures young lovers, but wounds old ones more deeply, did what reaſon could not do. The cardinal's letters were read to him, in which he inceſſantly reproached him for renouncing the advantage of being the greateſt king in the world, to live diſhonoured with Mancini. The cardinal enumerated all the ſervices he had done for the kingdom, which in reality he had almoſt ruined, all the dangers from which his advice had extricated the king, after having precipitated him into them by the arbitrary, yet mean faults of his government. He threatened him with quitting him for ever, and retiring into Italy: an inſolent threat, which ſeemed to acknowledge that he had thrown affairs into a confuſion, from which, he only, could diſentangle them. However the miniſter's letters had ſuch weight with the king, that he conſent-

ed

* Memoirs of Montpenſier, vol. 4. p. 145.

ed his marriage with the Infanta ſhould be concluded.

That princeſs did not want beauty, ſhe had a noble mein, fine eyes, and a very fair complexion: but there was nothing ſtriking, nothing animated in her perſon: Her goodneſs gained her every heart, but that which was moſt neceſſary to her happineſs. She had no ambition, and, no capacity for governing; her thoughts were wholly employed on the love of God, and the king's indifference, without ever murmuring againſt the creator, or complaining of the creature.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Of Madame de la Valliere.

To madame the Dutcheſs of B.

MADAME, to you I preſent the hiſtory of the dutcheſs de la Valliere, becauſe you have embelliſhed it. I give it again to the publick, becauſe what you have added pleaſed them, and becauſe what you left has pleaſed you.

Lewis had for the queen, his wife, all the reſpect and eſteem, her virtue merited, but found much leſs pleaſure in her converſation, than in that of the dutcheſs of Orleans, his ſiſter-in-law, who was ſiſter to Charles the ſecond king of England. The regularity of her beauty aſtoniſhed all thoſe, who had ſeen her in her childhood, when ſhe had few charms but many graces. If her ſhape had been perfect, ſhe would have been the maſterpiece of nature. Her converſation was peculiarly agreeable, ſhe had read the beſt authors, and enriched her mind with all that was valuable in them; her ſtate, tho' delicate, was unaffected, always juſt, and always fine. Her temper was ſprightly, equal, free, ſuch as the French adore: although ſhe ſtood neareſt to the firſt throne in the world, ſhe had perfections which ſhewed ſhe had been brought up in the boſom of misfortune; with all this, ſhe had the deſire, and the power of pleaſing.

This

This princeſs lived with the ſame kind of calm indifference with her huſband, as Lewis with the queen. They confided their diſguſts to each other, and often met to relieve them. A correſpondence which was at firſt entered into as a reſource againſt languor and diſlike, was afterwards ſtrengthened by ſentiments more tender. This produced little entertainments, gallant billets, flattering verſes; they walked in the woods, they ſtrayed perhaps from the reſt of the company; the courtiers whiſpered, the queen-mother was angry, the duke of Orleans complained, the queen wept, diſquiet and diſtruſt were now introduced among the royal family.

Lewis had too much honour to ſeduce the wife of his brother, he went ſeldomer to the apartment of the princeſs Henrietta, but he was not virtuous enough, nor ſufficiently maſter of his paſſions, to live without ſome amours, and he ſought out with eagerneſs, an object on whom he might beſtow his heart.

A young girl who was maid of honour to the dutcheſs of Orleans, ſuffered her heart to be touched with a paſſion for her ſovereign. She viewed with admiration the elegance of his form, his majeſtick mein, the manly beauty of his face: thoſe features ſo regular, yet ſo noble, that air ſo heroick, yet ſo languiſhing and tender; ſhe liſtened with delight to the ſound of that voice, at once ſo awful and ſo ſweetly inſinuating; preſent or abſent ſhe ſaw him ſtill, he was always before her eyes, always in her thoughts; ſhe ſtrove not to repreſs this growing paſſion, but took a pleaſure in nouriſhing in ſecret, the fires that conſumed her. Why was ſhe not a princeſs? why had ſhe not crowns to offer him? Ah! why, exclaimed ſhe, did heaven place him upon a throne? Oh! that he was a ſhepherd, that inſtead of a ſceptre, his only riches was that crook which he bore yeſterday at the ball, where my eyes ſaw nothing but him? But how unjuſt is this wiſh, is he not of all mortals the moſt worthy to reign?

In one of thoſe fine nights, ſo fitted for gentle reveries, the love-ſick maid with ſome of her companions

ons went to enjoy the freſhneſs of the air. The king who was walking with ſeveral courtiers, ſaw them enter the woods, and ſuſpected the young ladies went thither in conſequence of an appointment. They followed, but found they were deceived in their conjectures, and that their buſineſs there was not love.

The ladies ſeated themſelves on the graſs, the king ordered his train to keep at a diſtance, and approaching ſoftly with Beringhen, he ſtood behind a large tree, where unſeen he could hear all their converſation.

The ballet of the preceding evening was the ſubject of it, they praiſed the deſign, the dreſſes; each aſked the other who ſhe thought moſt amiable of the lords that danced in it. The votes were divided, one declared for the marquis d'Alincour*, another for monſieur d'Armagnac †, another for the count de Guiche: all the lords of the court were mentioned, but no one ſpoke of the king. Happily there was one among thoſe ladies who ſaid nothing, her companions rallied her upon her reſerve, ſhe anſwered only by a diſdainful ſilence. They preſſed her to explain herſelf. Alas! ſaid ſhe, ſuffering a ſigh to eſcape her, how is it poſſible to look at thoſe men, when the king is preſent? What! cried they, then it is a king, only, that can pleaſe you? No, anſwered ſhe, the crown adds nothing to the lovelineſs of his perſon, it even leſſens the danger of beholding him; if he was not a king he would be too formidable to a heart that is not inſenſible; but as it is, he inſpires a diſlike of every one but himſelf.

Beringhen perceived that theſe words made a deep impreſſion upon the king, Lewis felt the whole force of a charm ſo new, and ſo engaging. To find that he was loved independent of his greatneſs, ſoothed him into a tenderneſs unfelt before; that confeſſion made with ſuch ſimplicity, ſuch candour, without any of thoſe artifices, which every woman in his court employed to engage him, were the arms that love made uſe of to ſubject him wholly to his empire.

---

* Marſhal de Villeroy.

† M. le grand father of the late prince Charles.

Full of his good fortune, delivered from thoſe doubts, which poiſon the pleaſures of kings, he retired, and forbad Beringhen to ſpeak of this adventure. Beringhen foreſaw that it would have conſequences, and had already formed his plan.

The king's thoughts were employed during the whole night, on what he had heard: That charming voice which had exalted him above all other mortals, ſtill ſounded in his ears, and made its influence be felt even by his heart: convinced that he loved her who preferred him to the whole world, grieved that the darkneſs of the night had hindered him from ſeeing her, impatient to fix his ſentiments, he flew to the apartment of the dutcheſs of Orleans.

He ſaw mademoiſelle de Tonne-charante paſs by. Beringhen aſked him if that was the lady. 'It is not 'her I love,' replied Lewis. At the firſt glance he caſt on the maids of honour, he perceived one among them who had ſomething ſo noble, ſo ſoft, ſo engaging in her countenance, that he eagerly wiſhed ſhe might be the perſon whom he had over-heard the preceding night. He addreſſed himſelf to her, her ſoft confuſion gave her new charms: how great was his tranſport when he heard her voice! his paſſion became more ardent, he would have thrown himſelf at her feet, but he feared the queen mother, he eſteemed his wife, and was not willing to afflict her, and he dreaded the jealouſy of Henrietta; in a word he loved.

This lady was not a perfect beauty, but ſhe was ſo amiable, that one would imagine that it was her perſon which gave Fontaine the idea that he expreſſes in this verſe.

Et la grace plus belle encor que la beauté:

And grace more beauteous even than beauty's ſelf.

Her perſon was extremely genteel; there was, in her leaſt motions, an inexpreſſible grace, which inſenſibly captivated the heart. Her hair, tho' of a colour very common, was the fineſt in the world; her eyes were a dark blue, bright, ſhining, full of expreſſion; long

long black eye-laſhes ſoftened their luſtre, and gave them a look ſo ſweet, ſo tender, ſo modeſt, as inſpired, at once, eſteem and love: her face was rather too long, her mouth was not ſmall enough, but the colour of her lips was extremely beautiful: her complexion was tolerably good, her neck very ſmall: ſhe had an inchanting ſmile, fine hands and arms, and a ſhape wholly faultleſs.* Conſidered thus particularly ſomething might be found amiſs, but altogether ſhe was beautiful.

Her mind was ſtill more amiable than her perſon, all beautiful ſimplicity, native rectitude, and artleſs truth: ſhe had no caprices in her temper, no weakneſſes to correct; her heart was formed for love, and was incapable of any other paſſion.

She had the moſt refined delicacy in her ſentiments, without having the leaſt ſhare of that kind of wit which wounds it.

Her fortune was very ſmall; her mother having married a third huſband, ſhe could not hope for an eſtabliſhment ſuitable to the nice ſenſibility of her heart. A man of quality of the province of Normandy, who was an officer in the French guards, conceived a violent paſſion for her; ſhe was not at liberty to give him an abſolute refuſal; he offered to marry her, he engaged her gratitude, but ſhe could not prevail with herſelf to give her hand to a man who could inſpire her with no other ſentiment. However, her relations, her friends, her taſte for retirement, had almoſt determined her to accept him.

Such was the lady with whom the king was enamoured, ſuch was mademoiſelle de la Valliere. † I ſhall

* This is not an imaginary picture, ſee the memoirs of the princeſs de Montpenſier, and thoſe of madame Motteville, Buſſy's Amorous Gauls, and all the original portraits of madame de la Valliere.

† Louiſa Frances de la Baume le Blanc, born Auguſt 6, 1644, maid of honour to the dutcheſs of Orleans

ſhall be ſilent, with regard to her anceſtors, her family had nothing in it more illuſtrious then herſelf.

The king's viſits to the dutcheſs of Orleans began again to be frequent, Henrietta was pleaſed with his aſſiduity, but ſhe ſoon perceived was not the cauſe of it. She endeavoured to diſcover her rival, ſhe failed in her attempts, and all the ladies of her court felt the effects of her jealouſy and ſuſpicion.

The maids of honour talked publickly of the tender ſentiments mademoiſelle de Valliere had expreſt for the king. The dutcheſs of Orleans neglected this report, the queen mother imputed what ſhe had ſaid, which gave occaſion for it, to the ſimplicity of her heart, and an imagination warmed by reading Spaniſh Romances. The ſtory furniſhed matter for diverſion and raillery to the courtiers: the count de Guiche ſaid to her, as ſhe entered the drawing-room, 'Ah! 'you then are the beauty with the dying eyes.' She was diſconcerted, and the king bluſhed.

The firſt ſentiments of Lewis were honourable; he reſolved to make her fortune by marrying her to one of the richeſt lords of the court: he mentioned the affair to the count de Guiche, 'My friend, re-'plied the count, likes only beautiful women. I will 'raiſe her to ſuch a heighth, ſaid the king, that the 'niceſt judges of beauty ſhall allow her to be beauti-'ful.

The king was ſtill kept in reſtraint by his mother and his miniſters, concealed with care a paſſion, in which he might meet with ſome difficulties. But it was neceſſary that he ſhould declare his ſentiments to her he ſo tenderly loved, and this was not eaſy to be done. Chance however afforded him the ſo eagerly ſought opportunity. The whole court taking the air one day in the park at Vincennes, it ſuddenly rained, they all diſperſed, every one ran to find out ſome ſhelter, the lovers remained behind, Mademoiſelle de la Valliere, becauſe

leans in 1662. In 1665, Frances le Prevot, her mother, married James de Courtavel, marquis de Saint Remy, who was her third huſband.

becauſe ſhe was a little lame, and Lewis, becauſe he would not leave the perſon he loved.

The king offered his hand to Mademoiſelle de la Valliere: he was ſilent at firſt, through the timidity which always accompanies a real paſſion, but the certainty of being lov'd ſetting him free from reſtraint, he at length diſcovered to her the ſentiments ſhe had inſpired him with. He had promiſed to lead her back the ſhorteſt way, but he forgot this promiſe, and detained her a whole hour with his hat under his arm, tho' it did not ceaſe to rain the whole time.

The king had declared himſelf too unreſervedly, not to give him a claim to write to her. Beringhen delivered a great many letters to her, none of which ſhe anſwered.

The king was ſo preſſing, that ſhe determined at length to write to him. Benſerade, a courtier, tho' a genius, went to her apartment and found her ſtudying the anſwer ſhe intended to ſend the king. He rallied her upon the deep revery he ſaw her in: ſhe told him, that ſhe was endeavouring to compoſe a letter to a certain perſon, to whom ſhe did not deſire to give hope, but was not willing to afflict him. Benſerade gueſſing the true ſtate of her heart, wrote a letter for her immediately, which ſeemed to ſay and to unſay at the ſame time, which promiſed nothing, and retracted all, as if ſhe had promiſed a great deal.

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere copied this letter; ſhe made it more reſpectful, and, unperceived by herſelf, more tender.

Lewis was charmed with it; he found his miſtreſs had not only tenderneſs but wit, and he reproached himſelf with the injuſtice he had been guilty of, in having for one moment doubted of it.

The lovers ſaw each other every day in the apartment of the dutcheſs of Orleans, but they durſt not converſe together. Their eyes alone expreſſed their mutual paſſion; however this dumb language did not ſatisfy two Hearts which only ſought to be united for ever.

Lewis was deſirous of ſaying ſomething to Mademoiſelle de la Valliere, which looks could not make her comprehend. He would tell her that he intended to give an Entertainment to the court, but which was deſigned only for her. His thoughts upon this occaſion ſeemed to him to require the language of poetry, and he had recourſe to the ready muſe of Benſerade, who compoſed a very elegant epiſtle for him, half verſe half proſe. Mademoiſelle de la Valliere, blinded by the exceſs of her paſſion, eaſily perſuaded herſelf, that this correſpondence was only an innocent intercourſe of wit.

That ſhe might ſupport the idea her firſt letter to the king had given him of hers, ſhe ſingled out Benſerade in the drawing-room, and deſired him to come to her apartment in the evening, but with ſo much caution as not to be perceived.

Benſerade was handſome, he had not been unſucceſsful with the ladies, Mademoiſelle de la Valliere had perhaps ſome favourable ſentiments for him; at the appointed time he went to her with as much ſecrecy, and as many precautions as if ſhe had given him an aſſignation. Charmed with his good fortune, he threw himſelf at her feet when he entered her apartment, his happineſs was ſo great, that he almoſt doubted if it was real. Mademoiſelle de la Valliere laughing, raiſed him from the floor. This is not the buſineſs, ſaid ſhe, you muſt compoſe an anſwer to this epiſtle. Benſerade became the confident of both lovers, while neither ſuſpected it. He expreſſed their ſentiments, he ſet them at variance, he reconciled them, he ſeparated them, and brought them together again juſt as he pleaſed.

The queen mother made a lottery every evening, ſhe gave tickets to the courtiers, and theſe tickets were looked upon as diſtinguiſhing marks of favour.

In one of the lotteries, the king won a pair of diamond bracelets of great value: to whom ſhould he preſent them? the queen looked upon them with hope, the dutcheſs of Orleans expected them with eagerneſs.

Made-

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere had retired to a corner of the room, where ſhe generally placed herſelf, that ſhe might unobſerv'd enjoy the intoxicating pleaſure of gazing upon the king. Lewis drew near and preſented the bracelets to her: 'they are very fine,' ſaid ſhe, caſting down her eyes, and made a motion to return them to him, 'and they are in too lovely hands,' ſaid the king, to be ever given back to mine.' Mademoiſelle de la Valliere bluſhed, the dutcheſs of Orleans grew pale, the queen mother ſhewed great uneaſineſs, and the ſilence of the company aſtoniſhed her.

Henrietta enraged at ſo public a preference, caſt terrible looks upon Mademoiſelle de la Valliere; ſhe cauſed her to be ſtrictly watched, ſhe watched her, herſelf, but could diſcover nothing to her diſadvantage, and was no leſs mortified to find her innocent, than to know that the king had deſerted her.

The bracelets had ſet the whole court in a flame, all were ſollicitous to know which of the two would be victorious, the princeſs, or her maid of honour; but all were ſilent, for it was no longer ſafe to ſpeak freely.

The king often took the ladies to the chace, and was pleaſed at ſeeing them in that amazonian dreſs, which queen Chriſtina had introduced into France and Italy. Mademoiſelle de la Valliere looked particularly graceful in this dreſs; it was ſuited to the eaſy elegance of her ſhape and air, ſhe made up all the pleaſure of theſe parties. Henrietta, for whom they always ſeemed deſigned, often broke them off; her pride would not ſuffer her to appear in a habit which contraſted the faults of her ſhape, with the beauty of that of her rival.

The love between Lewis and Mademoiſelle de la Valliere increaſed every day, and every day they found it more difficult to ſpeak to each other, ſuch was the vigilance with which they were watched. But paſſion is fruitful in expedients. The king found out a path upon the leds with which the roofs of all the palaces

were covered, and which led to the apartment of Mademoiſelle d'Artigny,* which joined cloſe to that of Mademoiſelle de la Valliere. Beringhen was ſent by the king to Mademoiſelle d'Artigny, to engage her in his intereſt. This young lady having failed in her attempt to be the miſtreſs, thought herſelf highly honoured in being the confidant of her ſovereign, and promiſed to introduce him that very night into the chamber of her friend.

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere was reclined in an arm chair, half undreſt, all her thoughts employed on her illuſtrious lover. The day often found her ſeated in this chair, leaning upon a table, her eyes fixed, her whole ſoul filled with the idea of him ſhe loved. At that moment perhaps ſhe was murmuring againſt the vigilance of Henrietta's ſpies, and the ſeverity of the queen-mother. A little noiſe which ſhe heard in her chamber, drew her out of her revery; ſhe perceived the king, ſhe ſtarted back with terror and ſurprize. Lewis threw himſelf at her feet. She would have fled, he detained her; ſhe threatened, he appeaſed her; ſhe wept, he wiped away her tears; ſhe complained of the treachery of Mademoiſelle d'Artigny, he prevailed upon her to pardon it; ſhe dreaded the temerity of a lover, he removed her fears with the oaths of a king; ſhe intreated him to leave her, he obeyed. Love brought him back again the ſame moment, love procured him permiſſion to ſtay longer.

Lewis now thought he might own to her that he had heard a converſation which ſhe had in the park with ſome of her companions; he put her in mind of the day, the night; a day, a night which he would ever preſerve the remembrance of.

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere thought herſelf undone, ſince the king was acquainted with her paſſion for him. What cannot virtue attempt to preſerve itſelf? ſhe would

* The king rewarded her for her fidelity, by giving her a large portion, and in 1666 married her to the count du Roule.

would have given another meaning to her words, but ſhe was too artleſs to ſucceed, her tenderneſs betrayed her. Lewis was cruel enough to require a plain confeſſion, and he obtained it, he read in her fine eyes that ſhe bleſt the happy chance which had revealed her ſecret, without wounding her modeſty, or giving her any cauſe to reproach herſelf.

The reſpectful behaviour of the king during this interview, was a proof of his love; a proof which is little underſtood, becauſe few have delicacy enough to deſire it.

The morning appeared before the lovers thought of ſeparating. Mademoiſelle d'Artigny came to inform the king that it was time to retire. Lewis departed more in love than ever with Mademoiſelle de la Valliere. He was charmed with that ſimplicity, that innocence, thoſe modeſt graces infinitely more dangerous than regular beauties, who are beheld with admiration, but do not always touch the heart. Never was there a paſſion more ſincere, more tender than that between the king and la Valliere; it had all the ardour the great ſoul of Lewis was capable of, all the delicacy that diſtinguiſhed the gentle one of Mademoiſelle de la Valliere.

Even jealouſy increaſed their happineſs. The king danced with Mademoiſelle de Pons, he ſeemed to admire her, Mademoiſelle de la Valliere was alarmed.

In one of thoſe ſtolen interviews which their confidant d'Artigny contrived for them, Mademoiſelle de la Valliere complained of this little infidelity, but not with the rage of jealouſy, the inſolence of caprice, but with the ſoftneſs, the anxiety of doubting love. Lewis aſſured her that he had not the leaſt inclination for Mademoſelle de Pons, but was rather diſguſted with the too great freedom of her behaviour; he acknowledged that he had diſtinguiſhed her particularly to remove the apprehenſions of the queen-mother, and to hinder the court from ſuſpecting the object of his real love. This explanation baniſhed all jealouſy from the tender breaſt of Mademoiſelle de la Valliere, her

paſſion was now ſtrengthened by confidence, the king's was increaſed by hope.

Lewis went every day to viſit the dutcheſs of Orleans, but entertained her with different diſcourſe upon indifferent ſubjects only, made her almoſt mad with vexation, and tired himſelf: he was condemned to this reſtraint by Mademoiſelle de la Valliere, who had conjured him to ſuffer the dutcheſs ſtill to believe he loved her. 'I am not capable of diſſembling thus, ſaid the king 'to her. But it is I who intreat you to do ſo,' replied Mademoiſelle de la Valliere.

Their interviews were very frequent, the king always departed more paſſionate, becauſe mademoiſelle de la Valliere was always more reſerved; every day made it more eaſy for her to practiſe this reſerve, every day made it more difficult for Lewis.

Some ſpies had given notice to their employers that a man of noble mein had been ſeen in the night upon the leds. The dutcheſs de Navailles imparted this diſcovery to a prieſt, and to the duke de Navailles her huſband, a courtier, but a man of inflexible virtue. She took their advice which was to have the windows in the apartments of mademoiſelle de la Valliere and her confidant grated, to prevent all communication between the leds, and the lodgings of the maids of honour.

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere was extremely mortified at this affront, which apparently ſeemed levelled at her, or at leaſt divided the ſuſpicions between her and mademoiſelle d'Artigny. The next day all the windows in the lodgings of the maids of honour were grated.

The king threatned the perſons who had given theſe orders with his vengeance, every one trembled, but the dutcheſs de Navailles, who maintained, that ſhe had done her duty. The queen-mother appeaſed the king, ſhe made him ſuch ſeaſonable remonſtrances, ſo forcibly yet ſo gently urged, that the king was affected, he ſighed, he complained, but he vanquiſhed himſelf at laſt.

He

He was reſolved to confeſs himſelf, and intreated the queen to lend him her oratory, that this act of humiliation and repentance might not be known. Such is the power of love, it makes us aſhamed of performing our duty. That very evening he ſpoke with great kindneſs to the dutcheſs de Navailles, he gave her his hand, and deſired they might be friends.

The counteſs of Soiſſons hated mademoiſelle de la Valliere; ſhe thought ſhe had robbed her of thoſe remains of tenderneſs the king had felt for her after her marriage: ambition, love, jealouſy, thoſe powerful paſſions of the mind, raged all at once in hers. She endeavoured to draw the king's notice upon mademoiſelle de la Motte-Houdancour, with a hope of enjoying his confidence, ſince ſhe could not his love. The king fell into the ſnare ſhe had laid for him, but he was not long retained in it, this appearance of paſſion was like the lightning's flaſh * ſudden and ſhort. He returned more ardent than before to mademoiſelle de la Valliere, and broke off for ever all connexion with the counteſs de Soiſſons, who tormented him inceſſantly, only becauſe ſhe had once loved him.

While Lewis rendered himſelf guilty of inattention at leaſt, Mademoiſelle de la Valliere refuſed offers, which to any other would have appeared irreſiſtible. Fouquet who poſſeſſed the great art of uſing nobly an immenſe fortune, ſighed for her: this ſuperintendant of the finances, who was too rich, and too vain of his ſucceſſes, to believe any woman incorruptible, had valued the chaſtity of mademoiſelle de la Valliere at fifty thouſand crowns. This propoſal was received with the utmoſt contempt.

Fouquet now found that if pleaſures could be purchaſed, love could not; he knew not his rival, with ſuch

* Mademoiſelle de la Motte puniſhed herſelf for her eaſy yielding by retiring to Chaillot: ſhe lived there in the practice of good works, and came in the year 1691 to Saint Cyr, with the reverend mother Priolo, who was choſe to finiſh the eſtabliſhment of that community.

ſuch care had the ſecret been kept, but Lewis was not ignorant of the offers he had made, and never forgave him for having dared to caſt a profane eye on a perſon, whoſe leaſt favour was to the greateſt king in the world the ſupremeſt happineſs. Lewis did not imagine her ſeduction poſſible. Fouquet had believed it eaſy.

The king's reſpect and conſideration for his wife, would not permit him to enter the apartments of the maids of honour, he had no other means of converſing with mademoiſelle de la Valliere, but through an opening in a wainſcot partition, as ſmall as that where Pyramus and Thiſbe met to declare their mutual love, and where they ſaid things, as tender, and as paſſionate.

The dutcheſs de Navailles was ſoon informed of this new ſtratagem, the firſt exploits of her exceſſive rigour had done her honour, and ſhe was deſirous of acquiring an increaſe of fame, by raiſing new obſtacles to the happineſs of the lovers; ſhe cauſed the wainſcot to be repaired, and thus prevented thoſe conferences which ſhe foreſaw, would have dangerous effects.

The king, tho' he could ſet bounds to his own inclinations, was not capable of ſubmitting to be reſtrained by others, and would have baniſhed the duke and dutcheſs de Navailles from the court, if his mother had not repreſented to him that ſuch a publick expreſſion of his reſentment, would inform the queen of the whole affair; whoſe nice ſenſibility it was neceſſary to pay ſome regard to, at leaſt while ſhe was with child. This ſecret became the great buſineſs of the whole court, and was concealed like all other ſecrets, with ſuch care, that no one but the perſon moſt concerned was ignorant of it.

It is certain that mademoiſelle de la Valliere uſed infinite precautions to prevent her correſpondence with the king from being diſcovered. What did ſhe not do to diſarm the reſentment of the dutcheſs of Orleans, and prevail upon her to forget the affair of the bracelets? But that princeſs took advantage of her ſubmiſſion to humble her more. The king often ſaw mademoiſelle de la Valliere bathed in tears, and ſhe was never

never ſo charming, as when grief added to the enchanting ſoftneſs of that languiſhing air, which was ſo natural to her.

The king ſubmitted to precautions, which few of his ſubjects could have been capable of. His reſpect for the queen, his tenderneſs for mademoiſelle de la Valliere, obliged him to expreſs the ſentiments of his heart under ingenious fictions. Mademoiſelle de la Valliere enjoyed, undiſtinguiſhed from the crowd, thoſe ſhews and entertainments which were made only for her.

However the queen had ſome ſuſpicions of the truth: complaints never revive a dying paſſion, ſhe therefore forbore to complain, and only uttered theſe few words to one of her women. 'The tall young 'lady you ſee there, is ſhe whom the king is in love 'with: alas! they are very cruel.'

The flaming zeal of the duke and dutcheſs de Navailles, the diſcontent of the dutcheſs of Orleans, the malicious arts of the dutcheſs de Valentinois, forced the king at length to ſet himſelf free from the reſtraint of ſecrecy.

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere wept inceſſantly, the idea of being pointed out as the miſtreſs of the king, made her tremble; pride, prudence, modeſty, thoſe powerful aids to virtue, ſtill ſupported hers, and ſet bounds to her love. She afterwards deviated from thoſe bounds, but never removed them entirely.

With tender and flexible minds, virtue finds reſources even under the influence of paſſion itſelf. A lady who was nearly related to mademoiſelle de la Valliere, awakened in her thoſe pious ſentiments which had been loſt in the delirium of love. Her arguments prevailed with her, to prefer virtue to greatneſs, and to ſacrifice her tenderneſs to her duty. But whither ſhould ſhe fly, whither ſeek a retirement, without fortune, without protection, without any reſource? Her ſoul divided between God and the world, ſhe ſtill heſitated, and could neither reſolve to leave her lover, or conſent to ſacrifice her honour; virtue ſuggeſted to her that ſhe ought to fly from the danger-

ous

ous court, and more dangerous king, but love, powerful love, retained her. She was at length fixed in her reſolution by ſome new diſguſts, and had fortitude enough to go and ſhut herſelf up in Chaillot, where ſhe deſigned to live unknown, far from the world, and from love.

The king enquired for his miſtreſs, and made thoſe whom he ſuſpected of being acceſſary to her flight, tremble at his rage: he was informed that ſhe was at Chaillot, and inſtantly quitting the Spaniſh ambaſſadors, who were with him when he heard the news, he ran out of the palace, ſaddled a horſe himſelf, and, attended only by one of his pages, * he rode with eager haſte to Chaillot. He deſired to ſpeak with mademoiſelle de la Valliere, his requeſt was denied; he threatened them with the higheſt effects of his diſpleaſure, if ſhe was not reſtored to him; ſhe appears; he falls at her feet, he weeps, he implores; ſhe yields; he brings her back in triumph, and commands his court to reſpect the woman he loves. 'You are no 'longer maſter of yourſelf,' ſaid the queen-mother, to him. 'If I am not maſter of myſelf, anſwered 'Lewis, I will be of thoſe who dare to offend me.'

This news threw the dutcheſs of Orleans into an exceſs of rage. She exclaimed with all the haughtineſs of a princeſs, the firſt in beauty, the ſecond in rank. 'What! cried ſhe, does the king prefer that 'mean creature, ugly, and lame, to me, prefer a ſer-'vant to the miſtreſs, a little citizen of Tours to the 'daughter, the ſiſter of a king!

Lewis heard of the extreme reſentment of the Dutcheſs, he went to her, and deſired her to conſider mademoiſelle de la Valliere as a girl that was dearer to him than his life. 'Yes,' replied Henrietta with a ſcornful ſmile. 'I will treat her as a girl of 'yours. 'I ſee, ſaid the king with ſome emotion, 'that becauſe I love her, all France will hate her.'

The king would not ſuffer mademoiſelle de la Valliere to return to the Dutcheſs of Orleans, he gave her

* Luzancy.

her an apartment in the palace, but which, to ſave appearances, and to take away all ſuſpicion from the queen, that princeſs muſt neceſſarily paſs through, when ſhe went to hear maſs.

The queen-mother flattered herſelf, that the king might be reclaimed by the arguments, and exhortations of his confeſſor, and at her deſire, father Annat ſpoke to him with great freedom and force; he repreſented to him that his conduct was not conformable to the duties of religion, and threatened to quit the court if he continued to perſiſt in it. That inſtant the king gave him his diſmiſſion. The confeſſor grew leſs rigid, but the king remained firm in his reſolution.

The next day two jeſuits appeared at the king's riſing, and while he was performing his morning devotions, one of them ſaid to the other, 'It muſt 'be confeſſed, that father Annat has been too ſevere.' To which the other replied, Father, it is very true. Annat's poſt was filled up by a man; who thought that with kings it was neceſſary not to haſten the moment of grace.

Lewis viſited mademoiſelle de la Valliere with the moſt eager aſſiduity, as ſoon as he could do it without conſtraint; and was happy after more than a year's reſiſtance and denials.

She carried about her the proof of her crime, but concealed it ſo carefully, that the court did not perceive it, nor the queen ſuſpect it.

Fortunately for her, ſhe was ſeized with labour at midnight, the king was preſent, he aſſiſted the phyſicians, ſhared in her agonies as a lover, and a father, trembled leſt his miſtreſs had been poiſoned, and in his firſt emotions ſaid to two ladies, 'Take all I poſſeſs, 'but leave me her,' received the infant in his arms, 'and became more paſſionately fond of the mother.

The queen went to maſs at the uſual hour. She entered the apartment of mademoiſelle de la Valliere, ſhe found it perfumed with tuberoſe, and orange flowers, and other ſcents, fatal to lying-in women. A terrible expedient, but to which mademoiſelle de la Valliere ſubmitted willingly to preſerve her ſecret.

He

Her attendants told the queen that mademoiſelle de la Valliere had been tormented the whole night with a violent colick. The queen who had on a Spaniſh petticoat of perfumed ſkins, came to the bed-ſide, and kindly enquired after her health.

It was reported about the court, that mademoiſelle de la Valliere had lain in: the queen herſelf deſtroyed that report, by relating what ſhe had obſerved. The next day la Valliere, who thought death leſs terrible, than the ſuſpicion of her fault, got up, was dreſt, and received the queen as ſhe went to maſs, and when ſhe returned.

The hope of keeping ſecret her commerce with the king, was the only conſolation of mademoiſelle de la Valliere, but this the counteſs of Soiſſons deprived her of. That lady had taken under her protection a young girl, who was daughter to an advocate in Paris: ſhe was extremely handſome, the counteſs was very fond of her, and deſtined her for a miſtreſs to the king.

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere happening one day to paſs before this girl without ſaluting her, the counteſs ſaid aloud to madame de Vantadour, 'I always knew 'that la Valiere was lame, but never, till now, per-'ceived that ſhe was blind.'

Mademoiſelle de la Valliere complained of this affront to the king, who forbid the counteſs to come to court. 'We will know, at leaſt, ſaid the enraged 'counteſs, whom are we to pay homage to, and the 'king ſhall be obliged to renounce la Valliere, or by 'publickly owning her for his miſtreſs, deſtroy a re-'putation ſhe is ſo deſirous of preſerving.'

Aſſiſted by the marquis de Vardes her lover, and the count de Guiche, the lover of the dutcheſs of Orleans, ſhe counterfeited a letter from the king of Spain, in which that prince informed his daughter of an affair that ſhe ought never to have known. They contrived to have it put into the queen's bed, where it was found by Molina, one of her women, who carried it immediately to the king. This letter cauſed great uneaſineſs to the royal family: it was wrote in bad Spaniſh, and eaſily diſcovered to be an impoſture. The king

king ſhewed it to the marquis de Vardes, who had compoſed it, and to the count de Guiche, by whom it was wrote, and commanded them to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to diſcover the author. They trembled for their miſtreſſes and for themſelves, and inſinuated ſuſpicions againſt the princeſs de Montpenſier, and monſieur the prince. At length they fixed upon the duke and dutcheſs de Navailles, who were diſgraced, notwithſtanding their proteſtations of innocence, notwithſtanding the tears and intreaties of mademoiſelle de la Valliere.

The king being thus betrayed by his favourites, in whom he had confided, no longer made a myſtery of his paſſion for mademoiſelle de la Valliere; he created her a dutcheſs, formed her houſhold; and gave her the hotel de Biron, which was magnificently furniſhed, for her reception.

The tender, the gentle la Valliere, always feared that ſhe was not enough beloved, yet always complained that ſhe was beloved too well. Lewis often ſuffered his reſpect for the queen to give way to his tenderneſs for madame de la Valliere, which wounded the miſtreſs almoſt as much as the wife.

The king carried the dutcheſs to a maſquerade, and left the queen to the care of his brother. The queen wept exceſſively, and complained that he had no pleaſure but in the company of her enemies. 'Who tells 'you this? replied the king. Ah! ſaid the queen, 'falling at his feet, though you ſhould hate me, yet I 'I will always love you.' The king was greatly affected with theſe words, a reconciliation enſued, and madame de la Valliere paſſed in tears and anguiſh the night which ſhe had expected to paſs in pleaſures.

The queen had a fault, which in a wife, is the moſt troubleſome imaginable, in a queen the moſt ſurpriſing. She was always apprehenſive of being deſpiſed. Molina governed her entirely, confirmed her in all her Spaniſh notions and prejudices, and received with inſolence the homage paid to the favour with which ſhe was

was diſtinguiſhed. She was at length ſent back to Madrid, loaded with preſents and execrations. *

The king was ſoon weary of his fidelity to a princeſs, who divided her time between prayer and play. He renewed his viſits to madame de la Valliere, and, to atone for his infidelity, endeavoured to procure permiſſion for her to come to court. Madame de Montauzier repreſented to the two queens, that their refuſal would irritate the king, but that it was poſſible he might be greatly affected with their compliance. The queen-mother conſented to it, but the queen being preſt, replied, 'How can I conſent to ſee that girl? I 'love the king, and he loves only her.'

Three days afterwards the queen was brought to bed of a dead child, her life was judged to be in great danger, the queen mother was always in tears, the whole court was offering up prayers for her recovery: Lewis was ſincerely grieved, and madame de la Valliere was inconſolable. The king promiſed that his miſtreſs ſhould marry, but that promiſe was forgot as ſoon as the queen was reſtored to health.

Madame de la Valliere, drawn from dependance, and in full poſſeſſion of the king's heart, never thought of exacting vengeance on thoſe by whom ſhe had formerly been inſulted, which is generally a favourite's firſt exertion of power. She ſeemed not to know that ſhe had enemies, yet every day increaſed their number, by never ſoliciting the king for any favour whatever. She ſhunned ſociety, ſhe deſpiſed grandeur; all collected in herſelf, ſhe had no taſte for pleaſures, every thing but Lewis was indifferent to her; ſwallowed up in the immenſity of her paſſion, ſhe was leſs ſolicitous to pleaſe, than fond of contemplating the object of it. She never forgot that ſhe lived in a guilty commerce with him ſhe loved, and always hoped ſhe ſhould be able to break it off: A chriſtian ſentiment which drew upon her, at length, all the treaſures of divine grace, by making her paſs a long life in the auſterities

* Memoirs of Montpenſier, vol. vi. p. 291.

auſterities of a ſevere patience, and in the bleſſed hope of pardon and mercy.

Some have attributed to a haughtineſs of temper, and ſecret diſcontent at having no part in the government of affairs and in the intrigues of State, what was the effect of nice ſenſibility, of extreme delicacy, and tender grief. Others affirm, that the king inſiſted upon her taking the veil, but Lewis tho' he had once been deceived, was not formed to be jealous.

It is certain, however, that being informed of the extravagant paſſion of an officer in the French guards for madame de la Valliere, he had a curioſity to examine into the affair. The dutcheſs gave him all the letters ſhe had received from that officer, the king read them, they were the letters of a man who loved more paſſionately than he did, who was not beloved, who knew it, complained, yet ſtill thought himſelf happy.

The king forbad her to continue a correſpondence with a man ſo tender and paſſionate; madame de la Valliere had already impoſed that law upon herſelf, and was not offended that the king had not gueſſed it: ſhe did not ſuffer her delicacy, great as it was, to be ever creating her new torments. She felt all with the extreameſt ſenſibility, ſhe pardoned all with the ſofteſt tenderneſs.

The officer, when he returned from the army, went with eager haſte to the dutcheſs of Orleans's court; he ſaw not mademoiſelle de la Valliere, he enquired for her, and was directed to her new dwelling, thither he ran, but was poſitively refuſed admittance. He came away with rage in his heart, a friend met him, informed him of her paſſion for the king, and with all the barbarous freedom of friendſhip fixed the ſtings of jealouſy in his heart. The unhappy lover, diſtracted with deſpair, cried out, 'then all his over with me,' drew his ſword, and ran upon the point.

Madame de la Valliere ſhed tears for the ſad fate of a man who had loved her ſo paſſionately; her heart, tho' wholly poſſeſt by the king, yet felt the tendereſt compaſſion for this unhappy lover. Modeſt, gentle, free from

from ambition, without any deſire of being diſtinguiſhed, ſhe taſted no other pleaſure in the ſhews and entertainments Lewis made for her, than to ſee the eyes of all the ladies directed towards the king, and his fixed only upon her.

She was not fond of adulation, ſhe required no homage, ſhe entered not into the intrigues of the courtiers, ſhe neither made a miniſter or procured the diſgrace of one. Her approbation did not hold the place of merit, her diſpleaſure might be incurred with impunity; love was the ſole employment of her thoughts, ſcarce did ſhe remember that ſhe had relations: ſhe withdrew from notice, ſhe was aſhamed of being a miſtreſs, a mother, a dutcheſs. 'We ſhall 'never, ſays madame de Sevigné, ſee any miſtreſs like 'her again,' bur did ſhe not alſo ſay, that Racine would never go beyond his Andromache?

Madame de la Valliere often offended, but always loved virtue: Her fall did not habituate her to guilt, her heart became every day more pure; love, by burning it with ſuch ardent flames, conſumed thoſe groſſer deſires which better prove the vacuity of the ſoul than fill it. Tho' no longer innocent, ſhe ſtill continued modeſt. As her tenderneſs increaſed, ſo did her love of virtue: ſhe every day grew more worthy of the man who poſſeſſed her, and of the God who had created her for himſelf.

She confirmed, without deſigning it, her empire in the king's heart; in her he always found the pleaſures of an agreeable converſation, the reſources of a delicate paſſion, the ſtimulation of reſiſtance, and the charms of conqueſt. Virtue, love, a diſintereſted love, a virtue undiſſembled, are ſtronger and more durable chains, than all that the moſt refined coquettry can form. 'Ah! ſaid ſhe to the king, reluctantly yielding, what 'unkind returns do I make to your paſſion, ſad, ab'ſent, importunate, and, if I may dare ſay ſo, jea'lous.' It would not be ſtrange, if the moſt artful coquet ſhould take for her model that very Valliere who was all truth and ſimplicity.

The

The fruits of a love ſo perfect muſt needs reſemble their parents: mademoiſelle de Blois, who was ſo long the ornament and delight of the court of France, had all the bewitching graces of madame de la Valliere, the beauty of Lewis, and the tenderneſs and wit of both.

The count of Vermandois, who was ſnatched from them too ſoon, promiſed the ſame reſemblance.

The denials of madame de la Valliere were the cauſe of ſome little infidelities in the king, he was ſoon aſhamed of them, he every where found pleaſure, but love with none but her.

Thoſe ſolemnities inſtituted to bring back ſinners to God; thoſe times of faſting, of prayer and repentance, ſo much dreaded by all miſtreſſes, were more feared by Lewis than Madame de la Valliere. They brought with them obſtacles, and furniſhed virtue with pretences for denials. To madame de la Valliere, it was never neceſſary to be recalled to a ſenſe of religion by extraordinary methods, ſhe felt, in its fulleſt force, the conſcious ſhame of her condition, and how deſpicable it was for any woman to be miſtreſs to the greateſt king in the world.

CHAPTER XLI.

Of Madame de Montespan.

THE court diſcovered that the king was waneing in his affection towards madame de la Valliere, and his heart was again beſieged. Again a thouſand ſchemes were laid to engage him. The ladies, the princes, the miniſters, all conſpired againſt madame de la Valliere; the queen grieved in ſilence, the confeſſor remonſtrated but was not heard, there was not a lady in the court who did not hope the king's choice would fall upon her, or one whoſe intereſt ſhe had engaged in. Thoſe whom age or uglineſs excluded, produced ſome young beauty, whoſe charms were already celebrated, or deſerved to be ſo. Each eagerly wiſhed that this place, formerly ſo diſdainfully refuſed by the

Guer-

*Guercheville and † Rohans, might be beſtowed upon herſelf, or upon one whom ſhe hoped to govern. Lewis beheld all thoſe commotions with indifference, his heart unbiaſſed by inclination, left to chance the direction of a choice, which he could not make through preference. His diffidence gave him an averſion to prudes, and his candour and ſincerity, a contempt for coquets.

Athenais de Mortemar, marchioneſs de Monteſpan, now appeared at court, and effaced all that had ever appeared there before. All the gifts of nature laviſhed profuſely on her perſon, an unaffected negligence, that gave charms to all her words, and grace to every motion, a bewitching languor in her voice and eyes, made up the moſt regular and moſt voluptuous beauty imaginable. Wit and beauty ſeemed hereditary in the family of Mortemar, on every ſide was found gracefulneſs of perſon, learning, and wit. Words, looks, all was beautiful in madame de Monteſpan.

The marchioneſs de Thianges her elder ſiſter, poſſeſſed every thing that was lovely in perſon and mind. The abbeſs de Fontevrault, her younger, would have been thought very handſome if ſhe had not had ſiſters. She wrote in Latin with facility, in French with elegance; ſhe ſtudied poetry, philoſophy, divinity, and became a proficient in each. She read Homer in Greek, to relieve her mind after the fatigue of graver ſtudies: the regulations ſhe made in her convent, were models for the government of all religious communities: in a word, ſhe was worthy to ſucceed to ſix princeſſes of the blood.

Vivonne

---

* Antoinette de Pons, marchioneſs de Guercheville, reſiſted all the offers and ſolicitations of Henry IVth, who ſaid to her, 'ſince you are really a lady of honour, you ſhall be ſo to the queen my wife.'

† Catherine de Rohan, afterwards dutcheſs de Deux-Ponts, anſwered Henry IVth, thus. 'I am too poor to be your wife, and of too good a family to be your miſtreſs.'

Vivonne * their brother had as much wit in converſation, as he was ſuſpected of intrigues in the cabinet. The marchioneſs de Caſtres, his daughter, did not degenerate from him. Their turn of wit was the ſame, and was ſo peculiar to them, that it was called the ſpirit of the Mortemars. It was a certain mixture of pleaſantry, eaſe, ſimplicity, and elegance.

Madame de Monteſpan would, probably, have never been taken notice of by Lewis, without one of thoſe little freedoms which often give pleaſure, but ſeldom excite love. She had the talent of penetrating into the nature of every ſpecies of folly, and of mimicking it with the greateſt exactneſs. Every evening ſhe exerciſed this talent upon the ladies, whom in the day ſhe had obſerved to lay ſnares for the king's heart. Her ſallies pleaſed, it was not poſſible to catch the grace, yet every one imitated her manner. The count de Lauzun uſed to entertain the king with them, and the king uſed to repeat them to the dutcheſs de la Valliere.

The count de Lauzun was continually extolling the beauty of madame de Monteſpan, either through the exceſs of a paſſion which baniſhed all prudence, or with a deſign to enflame the king, that a participation of the ſame pleaſures might ſtrengthen his intereſt, or perhaps to diſengage him from the princeſs of Monaco, whom Lauzun had reſolved to love, and whom Lewis ſeemed inclined to deprive him of.

The king deſtined, as it ſhould ſeem, to treat at firſt with contempt, all whom he was once to love with ardour, looked upon madame de Monteſpan as an agreeable woman, too volatile to be capable of a ſerious attachment, too gay for the nice ſenſibilities of true love, worthy of Lauzun, worthy of the trifling youth of his court. However ſhe ſpread all her attractions for him, ſhe followed him in all his hunting parties, ſhe offered to his view a face always new, in publick haughty

* Lewis Victor de Roche-chouart, marſhal of France, duke de Vivonne, general of the gallies, died April 3. 1688.

haughty and indifferent, in private ſo languiſhing, ſo paſſionate, that ſhe could not ſpeak to any one without ſeeming to demand his heart.

Lewis did not deign to defend himſelf. 'Obſerve, 'ſaid he to madame de la Valliere, obſerve how ſhe 'attacks me, ſhe ſeems reſolved, if poſſible, to make 'me love her. Probably he loved her then without knowing it. Madame de la Valliere became fond of a woman who ridiculed her rivals with ſo much wit, ſhe thought her incapable of entertaining any deſigns upon the king's heart, or of practiſing thoſe artifices which ſhe was ſo ready to diſcover, and to laugh at in others. She admitted her into her confidence, without foreſeeing that ſhe was aſſociating her in her pleaſure, and raiſing her to her power. There is no other way of triumphing over wit and beauty, but by keeping them at a diſtance; a reflexion which always occurs to the miſtreſſes of kings, yet is always neglected by them.

The princeſs of Monaco, who had been quitted by Lewis and again reſumed, was determined at laſt to know her fate. The count de Lauzun her declared lover, to whom jealouſy gave that quickneſs of apprehenſion which ſupplies the want of wit, forbad her to love the king, and afterwards diſconcerted all the meaſures ſhe had taken to make herſelf beloved. The Princeſs of Monaco thought it very ſurprizing that a lover ſhould be leſs condeſcending on ſuch occaſions than a huſband.

His inſolence, his threats, his artifices irritated the princeſs of Monaco, who, to free herſelf from ſo inſupportable a tyranny, intreated the king to ſend his rival to the army. Lauzun declared that he would not go, unleſs he was to have the chief command of it. He received a new order, and again refuſed to obey. He reproached the king with having a deſign to ſend him out of the way that he might raviſh his miſtreſs from him: he threw upon a table, near which Lewis was ſitting, his commiſſion of general of dragoons, talked in the ſtyle of an heroick lover in romances, and committed all the extravagancies of one. The monarch revenged

revenged the inſults offered to the man, by ſending the preſumptuous Lauzun to the Baſtile.

Madame de Monteſpan heard the news of Lauzun's impriſonment with extreme indifference, either becauſe ſhe had a natural antipathy to the unfortunate, or that ſhe was deſirous of taking away all ſuſpicion of an amour with him. Lauzun's diſgrace was but of ſhort continuance. The princeſs of Monaco pleaſed no more, after having pleaſed him. The king did not think ſhe deſerved ſo great a ſacrifice as the baniſhment of a man he loved, whoſe crime was occaſioned by an exceſs of paſſion, and an unguarded frankneſs. Lauzun returned to court with all the inſolence of a favourite whoſe power had been confirmed by a tranſitory diſgrace, and all the reſentment inſpired by a recent injury.

He happened one day to find the princeſs of Monaco with ſome other ladies ſeated on a green turf: the princeſs had her hand careleſly lying on the graſs, Lauzun as if by miſtake trod upon this beautiful hand, and upon her ſcreaming, haſtily turning on purpoſe to preſs it harder, he came towards her, and ſeeming to enjoy her tears, made her the moſt inſulting excuſes imaginable. Madame de Monteſpan thought ſhe could not be too cautious, how ſhe offended a man ſo powerful and ſo dangerous.

Poſſeſſed of the entire confidence of Madame de la Valliere, ſhe learned from her the way to a heart of which ſhe was meditating the conqueſt. Mademoiſelle de Mancini, whoſe favourite ſhe had been, gave her the firſt inſtructions. To relieve the inquietude of the dutcheſs de la Valliere, occaſioned by the king's increaſing coldneſs, ſhe invented entertainments and diverſions which brought him back for ſome time to his miſtreſs, but which did not rekindle flames that for want of fewel were almoſt extinguiſhed.

Lewis, tho' capable of all the nice ſenſibilities of true love, yet found his ardour abated by the extreme reſerve of madame de la Valliere: he was diſguſted with ſcruples which were always ſacrificed, and yet always renewed by a conſcience that appeared to him, to have

either too much or too little delicacy. The preſence of Madame de Monteſpan, always gay, always lively, was his relief againſt the languor of decaying paſſion, and the troubleſome advances made him by other women. He ſaw her every day in the queen's apartment, and every evening at the houſe of Madame de la Valliere; that lady who was too much in love not to be eaſily perſuaded of what ſhe wiſhed, attributed theſe frequent viſits to the agreeable converſation of her friend, and not to the ſecret infidelity of her lover: ſo credulous ſo blind are women, when under the influence of that deſtructive paſſion.

Lewis yielded inſenſibly to the irreſiſtible charms of madame de Monteſpan; they attacked his heart at a time when to the laſſitude inſeparable from a long paſſion was joined the pleaſing idea of being loved by a woman who deſpiſed all others, yet was by all reſpected and feared. He declared his ſentiments to the count of Lauzun his confident, Lauzun repreſented them in their fulleſt force to madame de Monteſpan: the artful beauty, who had now gained her point, ſhewed diſſembled rigor and gave real hope.

Their firſt interviews were carried on with the greateſt ſecrecy: how could they reſolve to give pain to a heart ſo tender ſo paſſionate as that of Valliere? Love, at preſent managed with ſo little delicacy, and tainted with all the vices of the age, was then accompanied with that decency of manners, that conſcious awe, that gave it at leaſt the appearance of being virtuous. The dutcheſs de la Valliere perceived the correſpondence which ſhe had herſelf ſo greatly contributed to form, ſhe wept, ſhe complained, ſhe was reaſſured, and pardoned.

Lewis always magnificent, always noble, gave the moſt ſplendid entertainments imaginable to his court. And by the prodigious concourſe of foreigners who reſorted to them, they ſeemed to be deſigned for all Europe. Theſe ſhews relieved him from the conſtraint and ſolitude in which he was kept by the tender, the doubting Valliere. The deſire of pleaſing his miſtreſs

firſt

firſt introduced them, they afterwards became ſnares for his fidelity, and brought with them little neglects, and they were now neceſſary, In theſe ſpectacles madame de la Valliere carried away all the homage, all the adoration of the fawning courtiers; madame de Monteſpan had all the reſpect and eſteem. The queen, the dutcheſs of Orleans, the counteſs of Soiſſons and even the greateſt part of the princes and noblemen, carried this reſpect to the higheſt degree. The queen becauſe ſhe depended upon her virtue, the dutcheſs of Orleans through reſentment againſt madame de la Valliere, the artful Italian becauſe ſhe hoped to govern her, and the great lords through averſion to a miſtreſs inacceſſible to flattery, and who induſtriouſly avoided any ſhare in the intrigues of the court. The unhappy Valliere neglected by the courtiers, betrayed by her friend, tormented with jealouſy, and loſt in hopeleſs paſſion, grew weary of entertainments, which after having been teſtimonies of love, now ſerved to diſguiſe indifference, and perhaps to conceal inconſtancy.

Lewis had taken great pains to perſuade her that he had only felt a tranſient liking for her rival, but when he ſet out to viſit the frontiers of Flanders, and to repair Charleroi, he found he could not ſupport the abſence of madame de Monteſpan, and therefore ſent for her to Aveſne with the queen, who took to herſelf the magnificent entertainments that were given by the king to his miſtreſs.

This confirmation of the king's paſſion for madame de Monteſpan threw the dutcheſs de la Valliere into the moſt violent deſpair. The king's excuſes gave new wounds to her afflicted heart. 'I love you, ſaid he 'to her, but I will not be reſtrained.'

Aſtoniſhment, grief, terror, ſeized the unhappy Valliere, at an anſwer ſo like the ſtern maſter, rather than the tender lover, no one conſoled her in her fall from favour, becauſe while ſhe poſſeſſed it, ſhe had neglected all the world: ſhe would no longer admit of viſits, from madame de Monteſpan,

who being apprehenſive that this miſunderſtanding would either produce ſome coldneſs in the king, or make her amour with him publick, complained of madame de la Valliere's reſentment, as an attempt upon her reputation.

Lewis hurried away by his ſolicitude to pleaſe the woman he loved, unkindly took advantage of his power with her who ſtill loved him, and commanded her to behave to madame de Monteſpan, as ſhe could have wiſhed the dutcheſs of Orleans would have behaved to her. 'Muſt I then, ſaid madame de Valliere, diſſolved in tears, muſt I then form with my own hand thoſe ties which bind you to another, and do you condemn me to this puniſhment?' The king and his miſtreſs, to appeaſe her, left her at liberty to act as ſhe pleaſed, but annexed ſuch conditions to this grant as made it impoſſible.

The dutcheſs de la Valliere, who trembled at the bare idea of being abandoned by the king, made a law to herſelf of his will, and ſacrificed to it her jealouſy and her revenge. What is not poſſible to love! Madame de Monteſpan found all the complacency, all the ſoftneſs of friendſhip, in a heart torn with the cruel agitations of an humbled rival.

Madame de la Valliere, delivered up to the moſt violent deſpair, uttered only this ſoft complaint. 'Alas! they know not all the torments they give me.'

So many ſtifled ſighs, ſo many devoured tears, plunged her at length into a profound melancholy. The king treated her with the moſt mortifying reſpect, madame de Monteſpan with the moſt imperious caprice.

She revenged herſelf on both by a precipitate flight, and withdrew into a convent, there to weep at liberty, and to forget love and kings.

The Prince of Condé, who from a mal-content was become a zealous courtier, diſcovered the place of her retreat, and conjured her to return again to court: but he found it leſs difficult to take a city, than to ſoothe the rage of an injured lover. Lewis was more ſucceſsful, two words wrote by his hand, reſtored to him

Valliere,

Valliere, who however could not hinder herſelf from ſighing out theſe words. 'Formerly he came himſelf 'to fetch to me, and now I go to him.'

This incident compleated the triumph of madame de Monteſpan, who till then had been adored in ſecret. The duke of Orleans, who had once appeared attached to her, and in whom the chevalier de Lorrain had inſpired other taſtes and inclinations, affected to be piqued at it. The family of the Mortemars ſeemed to look with indifference upon an elevation which they had uſed every artifice to forward.

The ready courtiers offered incenſe to the new idol, many of the great lords murmured at a choice which ſubjected them to a woman, whoſe ambition and inſolence would make them continually feel the weight of their chains. The old marquis d'Antin bleſſed heaven, that at length fortune was reconciled to his houſe.

But the marquis de Monteſpan was extremely afflicted at the report of an intrigue of which he never would admit of a ſuſpicion; he was contented that his wife ſhould be the miſtreſs of the count de Lauzun, but he would not ſuffer her to be the favourite of a king: a palpable contradiction which the fantaſtick laws of honour avows, and yet reconciles.

The marquis ſtung with jealouſy and rage, reproached his wife with her ingratitude, her perfidy, expatiated upon the exceſſive love he bore her, on the great matches he had refuſed for her ſake. Madame de Monteſpan, ſecure of the king's indulgence and ſupport, anſwered his expoſtulations only with inſults and contempt, and confidently affirmed that her correſpondence with the king was wholly innocent, and founded on friendſhip alone. She threatened him with the king's reſentment, if he continued to entertain ſuch injurious ſuſpicions, and of delivering herſelf from his tyranny by procuring him to be baniſhed.

Monſieur de Monteſpan grew furious at theſe words, he told her that in his houſe he knew no maſter but himſelf, and raiſed his hand to ſtrike the rebel, who dared to acknowledge another. 'He loves me, ſaid the

'marchioneſs, I own it, now ſtrike if you dare.' This confeſſion was not likely to calm the rage of the marquis, who revenged himſelf on his wife, both by words, and blows. Madame de Monteſpan alarmed the palace with her cries, her apartment was crowded in an inſtant, the queen, the princeſs de Montpenſier, all exclaimed againſt the brutal huſband.† The king, exceſſively angry that a lady from whom he had yet received nothing but hopes, ſhould be treated ſo diſgracefully, commanded the marquis de Monteſpan to behave to her for the future, with the utmoſt reſpect; and forbid him to carry her into Provence.

The marquis could no longer keep his rage within bounds, he was the firſt to publiſh that he was diſhonoured by a woman, who had hitherto preſerved ſome degree of reputation: he made uſe of every ſtratagem to diſturb the happineſs of the lovers, he went into deep mourning for his wife, as if ſhe was dead, attributed defects to her which none but a huſband could know, wrote to the pope to obtain the ſame permiſſion to marry again, that the laws of England grant to thoſe from whom their wives are forcibly taken by the king; and committed a thouſand of thoſe glaring extravagancies, which Paris applauded, becauſe Paris is malicious, and which Verſailles laughs at, becauſe our manners are very different.

The King incenſed at this behaviour, forbid the Marquis to appear at court; he afterwards baniſhed him to his own eſtates, and was now obliged to declare almoſt publickly a paſſion, which he had been deſirous of keeping concealed. Monſieur de Monteſpan* found in the Pyrenean mountains few friends, but many creditors; his reſentment at length ſubſided, and he condeſcended to receive benefits, or rather recom-

† Memoirs of Montpenſier.

* Henry Lewis de Pardaillan de Gondrin marquis of Monteſpan, ſon of Roger Hector de Pardillan de de Gondrin marquis of Antin, firſt gentleman uſher to the dutcheſs of Orleans, was married in the year 1663 and died in 1702.

recompences from the court: a hundred thouſand crowns purchaſed his wife, his ſilence, and his honour.

However the king could not help ſecretly condemning himſelf for this paſſion for a married woman. Henry the fourth, he often ſaid, attempted the honour of a princeſs, whoſe huſband might have defended her with his ſword, but mine is an eaſy conqueſt; the huſband of her whom I ſeek to gain, I can annihilate by a ſingle glance. He endeavoured to lull his conſcience, into a forgetfulneſs of his crime, by admitting the baſe palliations of his courtiers, and juſtifying it by example. But this ſcruple never left him, and was the happy effect of thoſe principles of honour and juſtice, which had been inculcated in his earlieſt youth. Madame de Monteſpan was often quitted and reſumed; her reign would probably have been ſhorter, if it had been better confirmed. The king's paſſion for her laſted fifteen years, becauſe frequent returns of remorſe extinguiſhed its ardour, and the neceſſity of having ſomething to love, ſtifled his remorſe.

CHAPTER XLII.

Madame SCARON *obtains a penſion from the king.*

1666.] IN the mean time madame Scaron was employed in ſoliciting the re-eſtabliſhment of the penſion which had been given her, by the queen-mother, and ſuppreſt after her death. A great many petitions were preſented for her to the king, in which the abbé Têtu who drew them up, diſplayed all the powers of his eloquence. Theſe petitions which always begun in this manner, *The widow Scaron moſt humbly intreats your majeſty*, at length wearied the king who was heard to ſay, 'Shall I always hear of the wi-'dow Scaron?' Theſe words gave riſe to a common expreſſion at court, *as importunate as the widow Scaron*.

Monſieur Colbert, the new ſuperintendant, to whom ſhe addreſſed herſelf, could not be perſuaded that her being the widow of a man who during his whole life

had done nothing but jeſt and ſuffer pain, could give her any claim to be put upon the liſt of penſionaries. The great Almoner thought there were diſtreſſes more worthy of relief, and virtue more deſerving of notice than hers. Madame de Chalais promiſed her her protection, but only promiſed it. Madame de Lyonne ſaid, 'I will conſider of it, I will ſpeak:' but in an accent and manner that declared the contrary. Every one offered her ſervice, but no one really ſerved her, and even her old friends no longer cared to ſee a woman who came always armed with a petition.

The dutcheſs de Richelieu was the only perſon who offered her an aſylum: ſhe thought madame Scaron was the fitteſt perſon ſhe knew, to ſupport the reputation of the Marais, which for ſo long a time had been the moſt diſtinguiſhed quarter of Paris, for the reſidence of perſons of taſte. Madame Scaron would not accept of her invitation, ſhe was reſolved neither to owe obligations to grandeur or to love. She was treated ſo ill by the world, that the world became indifferent to her; her only reſource was that dependance, which the pious and the unfortunate have upon Providence. But in the grief ſhe felt to ſee herſelf obliged for a uſeleſs protection to madame de Richelieu, and to mademoiſelle de l'Enclos for an aſſiſtance, ſhe thought it diſgraceful to accept, ſhe exclaimed, 'Ah! if I was 'a favourite at court, how differently would I treat 'the unhappy.'

In this ſtate of humiliation, when even hope was deſtroyed, pride ſtill remained, and was fully gratified in the increaſe of her reputation: her behaviour was regulated by a prudence ſo remarkable, that it raiſed her above thoſe injurious ſuſpicions, neceſſarily combined with indigent beauty; involuntary admiration conſoled her for the inſults of pity.

Habituated to misfortune, madame Scaron added every day new tenderneſs to a heart which nature had formed compaſſionate. She learned the ſcience of ſuffering with dignity, a ſcience uſeful in every condition. The juſt cauſe ſhe had to murmur againſt the cruelty of favourites, and perſons in power, made her reſolve

reſolve never to imitate them. The diſtreſſes ſhe ſuffered, from their want of compaſſion for her, prepared her for the extenſive charity ſhe afterwards exerciſed; her own neceſſities taught her the art of gueſſing thoſe of others, of preventing, and of relieving them ſeaſonably. The frugal management to which her ſituation obliged her, habituated her to that wiſe oeconomy which foreſees and provides for all; in a word, ſhe acquired in diſtreſs, thoſe qualities, which, in affluence, produced the moſt ſhining virtues.

Fortune at length grew more favourable: a marriage had been concluded between the king of Portugal and the princeſs of Nemours, that princeſs who had ſeen madame Scaron, and conceived an affection for her, was deſirous of taking her to Portugal: and madame Scaron, who was too unhappy, and too wiſe, not to look upon all countries with indifference, accepted the conditions that were offered her, and the day was fixed for her departure; but a fortunate incident defeated this ſcheme.

Madame Scaron had an inclination to be preſented to the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, before ſhe left France: ſhe was already known to her, but madame de Monteſpan, now a favourite, was tranſplanted into a new world, and had forgot the hotel d'Albret.

The marchioneſs de Thiange, who had always kept up ſome degree of intimacy with madame Scaron, readily conſented to introduce her to her ſiſter. The young widow having declared, that being reſolved to leave France, ſhe was deſirous of ſeeing the wonder of it once more. Madame de Monteſpan, whom the flattery of the courtiers had not yet ſpoiled, was pleaſed with this compliment, and expreſſed ſome regret at the queen of Portugal's deſign of taking madame Scaron from Paris. Madame Scaron replied, that having loſt her penſion, by the death of the queen-mother, ſhe was obliged to ſeek a decent eſtabliſhment in another kingdom. The marchioneſs de Monteſpan liſtened to her with attention, ſhe was moved with a diſtreſs, which with ſo much beauty, proved ſo much virtue; ſhe aſked her for a petition, and promiſed to deliver it.

And now the petitions of madame Scaron appeared again at court. 'What,' cried the king, 'the widow 'Scaron again!' 'Indeed, ſire, ſaid madame de Monteſpan, it is long ſince you ought to have heard no 'more of her, and I am greatly ſurpriſed that your 'majeſty has yet done nothing for that poor woman, 'whoſe anceſtors have been ruined in the ſervice of 'yours.'

The hand that preſented this petition, procured it a favourable reception. The marquis d'Alincour who who had only a ſlight knowledge of madame Scaron, but who was become the general protector of all that were unfortunate, ſolicited earneſtly for her, ſure of pleaſing his maſter, as much by requeſting a benefit for another, as of diſpleaſing him, by deſiring a favour for himſelf.

The penſion was granted, and the voyage to Portugal laid aſide. The princeſs of Nemours went alone, to commit crimes, and produce revolutions in Liſbon; to accuſe of impotence a king who had had children, and might have had them by her; to throw into priſon the monarch who had raiſed her to a throne, and to marry her huſband's brother with the permiſſion of the pope.

When the firſt propoſitions were made for a marriage between the princeſs and the impotent Don Alphonſo, who was ſaid to be the moſt fooliſh king in the world; the duke of Nevers mixing in a converſation, which turned upon the *prince* of Balzac, and the *miniſter* de Bourzeis ſaid, looking at the princeſs of Nemours, 'The prince is good for nothing, and the miniſter is 'not much better. Well, replied ſhe, I ſhall have 'wit enough for him, and this lady (pointing to madame Scaron) will have enough for his miniſter.'

Madame Scaron went to return thanks to monſieur d'Alincour, and to madame de Monteſpan, for the benefit they had procured her: the former did not then foreſee, that ſhe would become the ſupport of the family of Villeroi, nor could the latter imagine, that her own deſtiny was fixed to this penſion, and that a woman, who expreſſed the moſt lively gratitude for the

the grant of two hundred piſtoles a year, ſhould one day diſdain to be declared queen of France.

Madame de Monteſpan was ſo pleaſed at her ſeaſonable ſucceſs, that ſhe would preſent madame Scaron to the king, who ſaid to her, 'Madame, I have made 'you wait a long time, but you have ſo many friends, 'that I was willing to have this merit with you, upon 'my own account.' *

Madame Scaron again aſſociated with perſons of high rank, whom ſhe had before avoided; ſhe accepted of an apartment at the hotel de Richelieu, as ſoon as ſhe could do it with dignity. The count de Guiche, the great favourite of the ladies, addreſſed her, and was rejected; aſtoniſhed at the novelty, he made propoſals, drew upon himſelf a ſevere anſwer, and was reduced to the neceſſity of making apologies. 'You 'are, ſaid he to her, the firſt woman that ever forbid 'me to love her.' The count de Guiche from a rejected lover became a ſincere and unalterable friend. †

It is with regret that I relate this circumſtance, I am ſenſible that ſuch diſagreeable truths may be conſidered as a reproach to an age which abounds with ſo many ſcandalous inſtances of frailty, that it will with difficulty be believed, a man, who, if he lived now, would be eagerly contended for, by the ladies, ſhould be ſo diſdainfully repulſed by madame Scaron. If ſhe had really been frail, it is not at all probable, that her cotemporaries would have believed her virtuous: vice may involve itſelf in the thickeſt ſhades of darkneſs, but the beams of truth will diſſipate them ſoon; if a woman young, beautiful, and diſtreſt, be thrown upon

* See the Age of Lewis the fourteenth. Monſieur de Voltaire ſays, that he was told this circumſtance by cardinal de Fleury, who added, that Lewis made him the ſame compliment, when he gave him the biſhoprick of Fréjus. It is very ſurprizing, that the ſame words ſhould have been ſpoke by this prince to two perſons, whoſe fortunes were ſo much alike.

† Manuſcript of madame de Glapion.

on the world, her virtue may ſometimes ſurvive her reputation, but her reputation will never ſurvive her virtue. The teſtimony of an intimate acquaintance will ſhew us what was the conduct of madame Scaron.

'She is beautiful, ſaid he, and her beauty is of that 'kind which pleaſes univerſally; ſhe is gentle, modeſt, 'grateful, ſecret and wiſe; ſhe never diſplays her wit, 'but to amuſe, or to gain friends; and, what in ſo 'young a perſon is truly admirable, it is not the wit, 'the riches, the gallantry of any man that recommends 'him to her acquaintance, it is his underſtanding, his 'love of virtue, and his regularity of behaviour: her 'choice of friends being thus directed, ſhe is in my 'opinion, in no great danger.'

It cannot admit of a doubt, who moſt deſerves to be believed, the chevalier de Mére, who knew her ſo well, or Sandras de Courtils,* who never ſaw her.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Madame Scaron *becomes a devotee.*

MADAME Scaron being apprehenſive that the taſtes, the follies, and the frailties of greatneſs ſhould be attributed to her, becauſe ſhe lived among the great, ſought in monaſtick retirement an aſylum againſt the preſumption of men, who being diſguſted with women of gallantry, attached themſelves to the virtuous, and by that attachment at leaſt hurt their reputation: ſhe on a ſudden by her dreſs, her behaviour and diſcourſe, made known that ſhe had commenced a devotee.

In thoſe times, as in the preſent, a monaſtick life was not choſe through piety, but for convenience. When the injuries of age, the reverſes of fortune, or irregularity of conduct, had taken away all connexion with

* A French officer who retired to Holland, and was the author of ſeveral libels againſt the court of Lewis the fourteenth.

with the world, a convent was the only reſource. There they found ſociety, youth ſeemed to return, the wounds of reputation were repaired, and fortune reconciled to them: when a lady with youth, beauty and an unſullied reputation, threw herſelf voluntarily into the retirement of a cloiſter, ſhe was quoted as a prodigy of grace; the devotee exaggerated the ſacrifice; the world aſcribed it to motives more meritorious than they really were; but it was ſoon perceived that devotion made no change in the heart; that the devotees choſe a man of intrigue for their director, and for their confeſſor a fool; that they boaſted of their perfections to the firſt, and concealed their ſins from the latter; that in appearance only they were reformed, while their inclinations became but the more wicked. From admiration they paſſed to diſtruſt, and were afraid of converſing with perſons who received the communion once a week. The publick contempt unmaſqued them completely, they were ſeen to return from their firſt fervor to the world, and from the world to their firſt fervor, where an external piety was made ſubſervient to their private intereſts. Theſe were called *falſe devotees*, an energetick name: for when one has once been a devotee, one muſt be ſo in all, and always.

The friends of madame Scaron were angry at her change; the world in general was ſurprized, that a young woman, whoſe paſt life had been ſuch as made no reformation neceſſary, ſhould ſo ſuddenly devote herſelf to the privacy of a cloiſter: as if a religious vocation was to be deferred, till the languor and infirmities of old age made it convenient, and the pleaſures of the world had been enjoyed till they had palled the ſenſes, and were no longer pleaſures.

The abbé Têtu, prejudiced againſt thoſe religious vapours, which the abbé Ruccelai, a Florentine, had introduced into France, and was therefore pious only by fits, told her that ſhe had truſted the care of her ſoul to a man who was too rigid and auſtere: ſhe had choſe the abbé Gobelin for her ſpiritual director. Gobelin, from a captain of horſe was become a doc-

tor

tor of the Sorbonne. His deſire to work out his ſalvation, had made him renounce the world, the danger of which he knew by experience: he was not ſolicitous to ſupport his title of doctor by that knowledge which is obtained by ſtudy, he ſought only the illuminations of grace; by theſe he regulated his conduct, to theſe he ſuited his condition; with the frankneſs of a ſoldier he united the zeal of a prieſt, and by the auſterity of his manners acquired a great reputation. He carried to ſuch exceſs that quality which is called chriſtian ſimplicity, and which is ſo often a maſque for the moſt worldly artifices, that he was many times taken for a fool: he debaſed himſelf through humility, and was unreaſonable through his ſcruples, yet he had a good underſtanding, and was full of the ſpirit of God. He had faults which even piety could not cure, a ſervile veneration for the great, a rooted paſſion for law-ſuits, and all the ſuſpicions, doubts, and apprehenſions of an unquiet and buſtling diſpoſition; his whole life was divided between law, preaching, and cringing to the great.

Madame Scaron, who thought an eccleſiaſtick ought not to have the leaſt tincture of ſelf-intereſt in his compoſition, often reproached him with this ſpirit of chicanery, which ſhe could only pardon on account of that inflexible principle of juſtice, which obliged him to be inceſſantly at law with his relations, his friends, and perhaps with his penitents. Notwithſtanding ſome ſhades in the picture of this director, yet it will be allowed to be that of a ſaint.* He was always reaching towards perfection, and from weak mortals exacted gigantick ſtrides.

Thoſe who were attached to the world and its pleaſure, and required indulgence in a director, accuſed him of carrying every thing to extremes.

It is indeed aſtoniſhing that we are ſtill ignorant of what is perfect, and what ridiculous, in matters which it is of the higheſt importance for us to know.

The

* Extract from the memoirs of madame de L.....

The abbé Gobelin prohibited the moſt innocent pleaſures; he enforced the neceſſity of a life of continual mortification, and thought it more ſafe to ſuppreſs, than to regulate the paſſions. Theſe beginnings were alone ſufficient to terrify a proſelyte. The abbé was inceſſantly perſecuting madame Scaron with reproaches for her remaining taſte for the world: her converſation was eagerly coveted, ſhe was invited to every party of pleaſure, and monſieur Gobelin would have her devote herſelf intirely to God. She dreſt with great ſimplicity, but that ſimplicity was elegant, and the abbé Gobelin ſaw luxury in that elegance. 'But monſieur, ſaid madame Scaron, my dreſs is only 'a ſlight ſtuff, plain linen, no lace, and black rib-'bons. All this is very true, replied the director, 'however, it is certain that when you kneel before 'me, I ſee fall with you at my feet, a great quan-'tity of this ſlight ſtuff, which flows with an ele-'gance and grace that I cannot poſſibly approve of *.' She had ſome reluctance to the minute practices of religion, becauſe it is probable ſhe yet believed but imperfectly the minute doctrines of it.

Monſieur Gobelin inſiſted upon her hearing two maſſes a day, and that ſhe ſhould conform herſelf to the received opinions concerning chaplets and images. 'I ought, ſaid he, to preſcribe you, for penitence, 'to go and kiſs devoutly all the relicks and images that 'are in the church.' He did not inſiſt upon this act of devotion, but ſhe has ſince ſaid, 'If he had or-'dered me to do ſo, I would have obeyed him, al-'though ſure of being laughed at by every one, and 'himſelf amongſt the firſt.'

That he might ſubdue her extreme deſire to be remarkable for her wit, he recommended to her to be dull and inſipid in converſation: but one's wit is reſigned with as much difficulty as one's ſword. Madame Scaron could not prevail upon herſelf to be abſurd, yet being willing to ſhew her obedience, ſhe took a reſolution to be ſilent in company; her friends rallied her

* Manuſcript of mademoiſelle d'Aumale.

her upon this whim, the abbé Tetu told her, that the abbé Gobelin was not qualified for a director, and that ſhe would ſoon be as ridiculous as him: ſhe continued obſtinate in her reſolution to obey, but finding that ſhe yawn'd herſelf, and made others yawn alſo, ſhe was within a very little of throwing off the devotee, and devotion likewiſe.

Her zeal was inſenſibly cooled by theſe exerciſes, ſo that after having obeyed every thing, ſhe began to doubt of all. Nothing gives religion a greater wound than fanaticiſm, and ſuperſtition perhaps makes as many perſons negligent in the duties of piety, as libertiniſm itſelf. Madame Scaron was perſecuted, but not freed from her prevailing inclinations; ſhe found not that calm pleaſure, that ſecret ſatisfaction which the abbé Gobelin had promiſed her, and which a voluntary ſacrifice of ourſelves can only give. Her reluctance to obey increaſed with her ſubmiſſion. She now began to treat as chimera's, thoſe myſtick truths which fatigue the mind, without affording it any recompenſe. The maſs, that religious act at which a chriſtian ſcarce eſcaped from the ſnares of ſin aſſiſts with an ardour tempered by fear, even the maſs appeared to her an unuſeful rite. 'I have heard her declare, ſays ma-'demoiſelle d'Aumale, that if ſhe had not been afraid 'of the cenſure of the world, ſhe would not have 'gone to maſs, even on a Sunday.'

The abbé Gobelin did not comprehend that the true religion, always great and majeſtick, when not tainted by men with notions ſuggeſted by their own narrow minds, directs us to the nobleſt uſe of thoſe gifts we receive from nature, but does not deſtroy them: and that faith finds certainly ſufficient exerciſe in thoſe uſeful tenets which are ſuperior to our reaſon, without loading it alſo with trifling acts that are contrary to it. However he moderated the ſeverity of his maxims, and permitted madame Scaron to have wit.

This taſte raiſed her an enemy in madame de la Faïette, who ſaw, with chagrin, her aſſembly deſerted, while that of madame Scaron increaſed every day. Madame de la Faïette emulated the reputation of the mar-

marchioneſs de Sablé, the ſame whoſe moral reflexions are now no longer read, yet ought to be known by heart. Madame de la Faïette ſought to ſupply her place, but could not hold it. The marchioneſs de Sablé poſſeſſed that kind of wit, which pleaſes perſons of every age and rank, and which is abſolutely neceſſary to every woman whoſe houſe is frequented by company not ſelected by herſelf. Thither reſorted the young nobility, to form their ſtyle, their manners, to acquire the title of fine gentlemen, and to qualify themſelves for entering the world advantageouſly. Madame de la Faïette, with greater powers of underſtanding, had not the happy art of varying and connecting ſubjects, ſo as to make converſation at once agreeable and inſtructive. Her temper was unequal, ſhe was ſometimes obliging, kind, inſinuating; ſometimes capricious, haughty and reſerved. With all this ſhe exacted great deference, great reſpect, which ſhe often received with indifference, and returned with inſolence. Her houſe was ſoon abandoned, notwithſtanding the duke de la Rochefoucault ſtill reſorted to it, and conſoled himſelf there for the gout, with which he was almoſt always afflicted, and for a phyſiognomy that diſpleaſed the king, notwithſtanding all his wit, which conſiſted chiefly in juſt thoughts, conveyed in familiar, and even proverbial expreſſions, which, from time to time, ſhone out with uncommon elegance of language.

Madame de la Faïette, who imputed to madame Scaron the general neglect ſhe met with, reſented it with great bitterneſs, and afterwards took a ſevere revenge on her * for having been more amiable and more eſteemed than herſelf.

The abbé Gobelin took advantage of that diſguſt, which his penitent now conceived, againſt thoſe ſocieties where it is ſo ſweet to reign, and ſo difficult to reign in peace, and reſumed his deſign of converting her. She liſtened to him with attention, ſhe obeyed him

* See her memoirs of the court of France, where ſhe endeavours to leſſen the utility of Saint Cyr.

him with zeal, and diſtinguiſhed herſelf ſo much by her devotion, that ſhe finiſhed the reputation of monſieur Gobelin.

In conſequence of his advice ſhe retired to the ſtreet des Tournelles, from whence ſhe often went to viſit at the convent of the blue nuns, where ſhe was greatly eſteemed by the lady of the marſhal de Rantzau, who had taken the habit, and by madame de St. Bazile, a woman of extraordinary piety, who frequently retired to that cloiſter to devote herſelf to exerciſes of religion.

In this ſolitude, from whence languor and diſguſt often attempted to chaſe her, ſhe applied herſelf with great aſſiduity to reading. Coulanges choſe her the beſt books, and ſent her every new production that merited her attention. Her underſtanding was ſtrengthened with all that the ingenuity and wiſdom of the age ſhe lived in, produced. Romances never pleaſed her, tho' mademoiſelle de Scudery pleaſed her greatly, ſhe preferred books of morality and hiſtory to every other, and among theſe, the hiſtory of Elizabeth, the life of Saint Lewis, and that Plutarch who is the admiration of all ages, and the delight of every taſte.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Madame Scaron *is made governeſs to the king's children.*

1669.] MADAME de Monteſpan had not yet thrown off all care of her reputation: when the king firſt declared his paſſion for her, ſhe appeared ſo fully determined to preſerve her honour, that one day when ſhe was ſpeaking of the amour between Lewis and the dutcheſs de la Valliere, 'If ſuch 'a misfortune, ſaid ſhe, ſhould ever happen to me, I 'ſhould never be able to ſhew my face, I ſhould dye 'with ſhame.' But theſe ſentiments were ſoon effaced: however, either through unjuſtifiable precautions, or a virtuous reſiſtance, two or three years paſſed away without producing any convincing proof of her frailty. The dutcheſs de la Valliere had the title of miſtreſs, madame

madame de Monteſpan the power and the pleaſure. She, at length, conſented to become a mother, but equally ſolicitous to conceal her frailty as to ſhew her power, ſhe would make a myſtery of the birth of her children, a precaution which might have had fatal conſequences for them.

Her growing bigneſs was not perceived; for among thoſe faſhions which ſhe gave, and altered at her pleaſure, always ſure to have them admired and followed, ſhe invented one which was not indeed very advantageous to thoſe ladies who had fine and elegant ſhapes to ſhew, but very convenient for ſuch as had faults to conceal. Mean time it was neceſſary to find ſome lady properly qualified to take care of theſe children, who could be capable of great ſecrecy, and of ſuperintending their education. Madame de Monteſpan caſt her eyes upon madame Scaron, whom ſhe conſidered as one of her dependants. It has been ſaid, that Lewis did not approve of her choice, but the favourite being convinced that ſhe could never make a better, deſired madame d'Hudicourt to propoſe to her the takeing care of a child who had a great king for its father.

This meſſage was delivered with ſuch a myſterious air, madame de Monteſpan's connexion with the king ſtill ſo undetermined, the report of her amour with Lauzun ſo recent, that madame Scaron refuſed the office. Vivonne's ſolicitations were as unſucceſsful as madame d'Hudicourt's, and the dutcheſs de Richelieu could obtain no more than Vivonne.

This refuſal gave offence, but madame Scaron was ſo neceſſary, and ſo reſolute, that they were obliged to ſend Louvois to her. The abbé Gobelin declared it was his opinion, that to conceal madame Monteſpan's crime, was rather an act of charity than an offence to virtue: madame Scaron therefore gave this anſwer to the miniſter: If the child is the king's, I 'will take the charge of it: but he muſt deliver it to 'me himſelf, I will have nothing to do with it as the 'child of Madam de Monteſpan.'

This

This anſwer was received with ſtill greater diſpleaſure, however ſhe was ſent for to court, and the king commanded her to accept the care of the child which madame de Monteſpan ſhould deliver to her. * This office was not thought diſgraceful, madame de Colbert, had brought up mademoiſelle de Blois, and the marchioneſs de la Sabliere was afterwards propoſed for governeſs to meſdemoiſelles de Nantes and de Tours.‖

Madam Scaron, whoſe unblemiſhed reputation ſecured her againſt all ſuſpicion of being the confidant of madame de Monteſpan's amours, chearfully embraced an office which condemned her to a retired life; ſhe declared to all her acquaintance the alteration ſhe was going to make in her manner of living. Her friends rallied her, the abbè Tetu predicted to her that ſhe would be ſoon diſguſted with it; madame d'Albret and the dutcheſs of Richelieu only deſired her not to forget their antient friendſhip.

Madame Scaron, to prevent any interruption of her neceſſary attendance upon the child, by too frequent viſits, hired a houſe in the middle of the Fauxbourg Saint Germain, where ſhe ſaid ſhe would live alone and inacceſſible to all, but her moſt intimate friends; and to take away all cauſe of ſuſpicion ſhe added, that the pleaſing care of a child's education ſhould relieve her ſolitary hours, and therefore intreated madame d'Hudicourt to ſend her daughter to her.†

Madame de Monteſpan lay-in in the moſt retired part of Paris, with all the precautions neceſſary to preſerve the moſt profound ſecrecy. Clement the man-midwife was conducted to her with a bandage on his eyes, and had ſo little ſuſpicion of the true quality of the infant's father, that he deſired the king who was preſent to help him to a glaſs of wine. When madame Scaron was ſent for to receive the child, ſhe took

* Memoirs of mademoiſelle d'A...

‖ See Sevigne's letters October 18, 1680.

† Afterwards counteſs of Montgon, lady of honour to the dutcheſs of Burgundy.

took a hackney coach in a diſtant ſtreet, and entering madame Monteſpan's apartment with a maſque on her face, the infant was delivered to her; ſhe covered it with her ſcarf, and went out ſtill maſked, not without great terrors leſt the ſecret ſhould be diſcovered.

Her extreme ſenſibility increaſed the cares of an employment, in its nature ſufficiently fatiguing; ſhe acquitted herſelf of it, not like a mercenary preceptor, but like a philoſopher, who knew what influence the character and conduct of great perſons have upon the happineſs of the publick. To the diſcharge of this duty, ſhe ſacrificed thoſe aſſemblies of which ſhe made up all the pleaſure, to this ſhe ſacrificed her ſleep, her beauty, her pleaſures, and even her reputation; for being deſirous to have mademoiſelle Balbien with the young princes, to alleviate her ſolitude, the relations of the young lady refuſed to comply with her requeſt, ſaying; 'all this, looks ill, thoſe children are her baſtards 'by ſome of her lovers.'

March 31. 1670.] The fruitfulneſs of madame de Monteſpan threatened her with a long continuance of her ſlavery. She was again with child, but was obliged this time to lye in at Saint Germain where the court then was. They durſt not venture to bring madame Scaron into the caſtle, the count of Lauzun who was the king's confidant received the child: they had not time to dreſs it, it was wrapped up in blankets. Lauzun concealed it under his cloak, croſſed the queen's apartment trembling, leſt it ſhould cry, and carried it to madame Scaron, who was waiting for it in a coach in the little park.

Madame de Monteſpan finding that each child was a new tye which bound the king ſtronger to her, and that the tenderneſs of the father fixed the inconſtancy of the lover, took care to lye in every year. Madame Scaron had ſcarce time to breath, nor could ſhe even hope for a ceſſation of her labours: her diſcretion, her activity was too well known to ſuffer theſe new fruits of a criminal paſſion to be confided to the care of any other: inſtead of one which was all that at firſt ſhe undertook to educate, ſhe had three. They gave her a very fine houſe near Vaugirard, a coach, attendants, in a word,

word, all that delights the imagination for a few days.

Madame Scaron to conceal the ſecret with more care, went every night to the different places where the princes were nurſed; in the morning ſhe viſited her friends, that it might not be known ſhe had not ſlept all night, and in the afternoon ſhe received company at her own houſe. All theſe precautions could not hinder curioſity from endeavouring to find out the myſtery nor penetration from gueſſing it. Whenever the name of madame de Monteſpan was mentioned, madame Scaron's face was covered with bluſhes; ſhe thought to remove this inconvenience by being frequently blooded, ſhe produced indeed an alteration in her health, but bluſhed no leſs.

Monſieur Colbert, as curious as the reſt, and more intereſted in a diſcovery, was reſolved to know if madame Scaron had children under her care: madame de la Valliere reigned no longer, but through habitude, madame de Monteſpan played every night with the queen. He went to madame Scaron's houſe, and that he might take her unprepared, entered her apartment without ſending in his name. Madame Scaron was that moment careſſing one of the princes: without diſcovering any emotion, ſhe dexterouſly concealed the child from his view, and cauſed it to be carried out of the room as a bundle of linen, entertained the miniſter with a calmneſs and indifference, of which he was, or appeared to be the dupe.

Madame Scaron conceived a tender affection for theſe children, by her cares and ſolicitude, ſhe purchaſed a right to love them more than their mother. The eldeſt died, and ſhe was a long time inconſolable; the ſecond was called the duke du Maine. It is well known how much ſhe ſuffered on his account during his youth, and how dear he was to her till her death.

Her letters to the abbè Gobelin give a lively repreſentation of the difficulties ſhe was engaged in, through the capricious temper of madame de Monteſpan, who, leſs tender, leſs affectionate than herſelf, rallied her for her extreme anxiety about the children, but never thought herſelf obliged by it. The houſe where the princes were concealed, happening to take fire,

ma-

madame Scaron, alarmed at the danger, diſpatched an expreſs inſtantly, to acquaint madame de Monteſpan with the accident. The mother's anſwer was only this, 'I am extremely glad to hear it, for fire is 'a ſign of good fortune.'

Madame Scaron went frequently to court, where her interviews with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan were managed with the utmoſt caution. Madame d'Hudicourt their common friend had an apartment there, where they uſed to meet, madame de Monteſpan to ſee her children, and madame Scaron to lament that ſhe loved them ſo little. They ſometimes ſuffered whole hours to paſs away unheeded, while they enjoyed, without conſtraint, the pleaſures of an agreeable and lively converſation. One day the king having aſked for madame de Monteſpan, madame d'Hudicourt ſaid to him, 'She is with madame Scaron, and they 'both talk on ſubjects ſo ſublime, ſo learned, that I 'who could comprehend nothing of the matter, have 'left them together.' From that moment the king conceived an averſion for the governeſs of his children.

Madame d'Hudicourt, from the confidant of madame de Monteſpan, aſpired to be her rival, ſhe pleaſed ſo little, that her intention to do it was pardoned. Madame de Monteſpan received her again into her intimacy, without deſiring an explanation of her conduct, Formed only to inſpire mirth, ſhe ſtruck not the imagination, the lovers had no occaſion for her interpoſition in their affairs, but they were accuſtomed to it: one day ſhe would be honoured with a place in the king's coach or gondola; the next, dying with languor, in the moſt unpleaſing company in Paris. She had lodgings appointed for her in court, but if they had the leaſt occaſion for her apartment, ſhe was ſent away without ceremony. It was ſaid of her, that ſhe paſſed all the days of her favour in diſgrace, and all the days of her diſgrace in favour, and ſhe was always equally diſtant from the one or the other.

To madame Scaron ſhe behaved in a manner wholly inconſiſtent with honour, gratitude, or friendſhip; ſhe convicted her of having made madame d'Albret

jealous

jealous of her: the dutcheſs de Richelieu forbid her door to madame d'Hudicourt; the marſhal d'Albret ſurpriſed her with the duke de Bethune, and reported what he had ſeen: but madame Scaron took more care than ever of the education of mademoiſelle d'Hudicourt, who paſſed ſometimes for the couſin, ſometimes for the ſiſter of the princes.

Her views, by executing the employment of governeſs to the king's children by madame de Monteſpan, were to obtain ſome grant of his majeſty, which might reward her for her labours, by ſecuring to her a ſtate of eaſe and independance. This hope was yet very diſtant, madame de Monteſpan would not ſolicit any thing for her, either becauſe ſhe was afraid of naming her to the king, or becauſe ſhe was apprehenſive of loſing a perſon who was ſo neceſſary to her. Invited into the world by pleaſure, kept in ſolitude by ſervitude, madame Scaron devoted herſelf heroically to all the mortifications of her ſituation, with a penſion of two thouſand franks for the price of her liberty, and with the mortification of knowing that ſhe was diſliked by the king.

The king's averſion to the governeſs was increaſed by every converſation, in which he ſurprized her with his miſtreſs: he admired wit, but hated an oſtentatious diſplay of it. He looked upon madame Scaron as a dangerous female pedant who had been corrupted by the commerce of a poet. He always called her, in contempt, *the wit*; when he came to viſit the marchioneſs ſhe always left the room with the utmoſt precipitation; and when the children were brought to St. Germains, it was the nurſe who preſented them to him, madame Scaron uſed to wait in the ante-chamber till the king went away, and till the capricious favourite was pleaſed to order her admittance, either to conſole her for the mortifications ſhe ſuffered by ſome obliging expreſſions, or to add to her uneaſineſs by unjuſt reproaches.

However the nurſe, by a ſpeech, uttered with the greateſt ſimplicity, ſet the ſervices of madame Scaron in a ſtronger light than ſhe could poſſibly have done herſelf.

herſelf. The king one day aſked her whoſe children they were whom ſhe brought to madame de Monteſpan. 'I believe, replied the nurſe, that they are the baſ-'tards of ſome duke, or preſident of the parliament, 'but I am convinced by the grief I ſee our lady in, 'when any thing ails them, that ſhe is their mother.'

CHAPTER XLV.

Madame SCARON *at court.*

THE king was deſirous that his children ſhould be educated under his eyes: an apartment at court was alloted for them; madame Scaron ſtill continued with them in the quality of governeſs, but with the ſame injunctions of ſecrecy as before. The dutcheſs de la Valliere, whoſe tenderneſs for the King would not yet allow her to quit him, remained at court, but, tho' certain of her lover's infidelity, ſhe was ſtill in doubt of her rival's crimes. The Queen began now to attribute to ſome other cauſe than colicks and vapours, the frequent abſences of her lady of the palace; but the dutcheſs de Richelieu removed her ſuſpicions, by aſſuring her that ſhe always made a third with the king and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan.

When madame Scaron appeared firſt at court, ſhe was rather ſuſpected of being miſtreſs to the king, than governeſs to his children. It was not enough that ſhe waſted her youth in this arduous employment, ſhe muſt alſo ſacrifice her reputation to it. Hurried on by concurrence of circumſtances that left her not the liberty of choice, encouraged by the abbé Gobelin, ſupported by hope, ſhe ſubmitted without murmuring to all the ſuſpicions which ſo equivocal a ſituation could give riſe to.

Madame de Monteſpan admitted only her into her confidence, madame d'Hudicourt durſt no longer viſit her, madame de Conlanges, * whoſe wit was an ornament to the court, had given offence by her indiſcretion: madame Scaron, who was every day better known by the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, became

* See Sevigné's letters.

every day more neceſſary and more agreeable to her. Then it was, that an intimacy commenced between them, which had conſequences too ſurprizing for the one to foreſee, the other to hope, or any of their friends to imagine.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan ſent for madame Scaron every night, and while her women were undreſſing her, engaged in a converſation, which ſhe uſed to continue a conſiderable time after ſhe was in bed. She had occaſion for the company of a lively and agreeable friend to relieve her mind, after the conſtraint of a tedious converſation with the king, which was indeed very gallant, but a little dry and unentertaining. Lewis was not pleaſed with this intimacy between his miſtreſs and the governeſs: he was weak enough to be afraid of perſons remarkable for their wit; he already perceived in madame Monteſpan more curioſity, more reflexion, and ſuſpected that her confidant inſtilled into her that ſpirit of intrigue, and deſire of knowledge which equally offended him. 'What pleaſure do you find, ſaid he to her, in con-'verſing ſo much with an affected pedantick woman? 'would you have her make you as affected, as herſelf?' Either through ſuſpicion or caprice, he demanded of her as a ſacrifice, that ſhe ſhould forbear to converſe with madame Scaron every night as ſhe had hitherto done.

As ſoon as the king went away, madame Scaron came in as uſual, the marchioneſs ſaid not a word to her, madame Scaron opened the converſation, ſhe had no anſwer, ſhe continued it, the marchioneſs was ſtill ſilent. 'I am informed, ſaid madame Scaron, that 'you are forbid to talk to me, it is mighty well, I 'ſhall turn this obedience to my own advantage, and 'go to ſleep.' Madame Monteſpan could no longer refrain from laughing, confeſſed to her all that had paſt, and kept very ill the promiſe ſhe had made, not to enter into any diſcourſe with her.

This ſecret favour was purchaſed by many mortifications; madame Monteſpan made her often ſenſible of the inequality of her temper: the haughty favourite had all the caprices of her ſex, and all the inquietude of her ſituation. Sometimes ſhe ſeemed charmed with

madame

madame Scaron and repoſed an unlimited confidence in her; ſometimes ſhe diſmiſſed her with an imperious air, and treated as her ſervant, a lady who owned the ſervice of none, but the king's children, and knew well how to make herſelf be underſtood.

Theſe quarrels were always concealed with great care, the king was ignorant of them, for they were followed with an almoſt immediate reconciliation, and every diſpute increaſed the aſcendant of the governeſs. Her taſte for ſociety often brought her back to Paris, where the illneſs of the duke de Maine retained her for ſeveral months together. There, in the converſation of a few ſelect friends, ſhe forgot the inſipid grandeur of a court, and laughed with them at the melancholy joys, and diſguiſed anxieties of the ladies at Saint-Germain, at the extravagancies of Lauzun, the deſpair of Valliere, and all the horrible agitations of a place with which ſhe was ſo well acquainted.* Madame de la Fayette, the marchioneſs de Sevigné, the Coulanges, the abbé Têtu, the duke de la Rochefoucault, monſieur Barillon, were the perſons who compoſed this pleaſing aſſembly.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Madame de Richelieu *made Lady of Honour to the Queen.*

MADAME de Monteſpan entered into all affairs, and diſpoſed as ſhe pleaſed of the greateſt employments about the court: the miſtreſs of a king is

* Madame Scaron ſups here every night, her converſation is wholly inchanting, nothing can be more agreeable, more juſt, than her wit; we liſten to her diſcourſe with a delighted attention: you are never forgot. She dreſſes with great elegance, yet with no oſtentation, ſhe is good, ſhe is beautiful, and ſweetly negligent. You ſhall not be attacked in this country, without being well defended. Letters from madame de Sevigné to madame de Grignon 26th February, 13th January, 16th March, 1672

almoſt neceſſarily a miniſter of ſtate. Madame Scaron was conſulted upon affairs of the moſt nice and difficult nature. The favourite had occaſion for a friend, whoſe ſolid underſtanding, and unbiaſſed judgment might correct the vivacity of her wit, and repreſs the impetuoſity of her paſſions: every day ſhe either ſpared her the commiſſion of ſome fault, prevailed upon her to eſpouſe the intereſt of ſome uſeful regulation, or directed happily her choice; and by the force of the advice ſhe was continually giving her, procured her that conſideration and reſpect, without which the ignominy that attends thoſe vices with which her place is purchaſed, would have fallen entirely upon her who then filled it.

Nov. 19, 1671.] By the death of madame de Montauzier, the poſt of lady of honour to the queen became vacant, and was eagerly contended for, and ſolicited by thoſe in whom ambition was abſurd and ridiculous. One thought herſelf entitled to this important poſt, on account of the great ſervices her anceſtors had performed: another pleaded the merit of an auſtere piety, ſuch as the queen was fond of: and another the advantage of a convenient and yielding virtue, ſuch as the king had occaſion for: this lady ſought the protection of madame de la Valliere: that endeavoured to gain the favour of their majeſties. Madame de Richelieu depended upon the gratitude of the Marchioneſs de Monteſpan; madame de Créqui upon the intereſt of the count de Lauzun.

The duke de Montauzier had propoſed his daughter madame de Cruſſol to ſucceed his wife, but in his vexation to find that her youth was objected to, he had exclaimed, 'A deteſted place, where miſtreſſes and 'miniſters engroſs all power to themſelves.' Theſe words were repeated to the king; he ſent for the duke de Montauzier, gave him a gentle reprimand for his indiſcreet ſally of rage, and puniſhed him next day by appointing madame de Cruſſol lady of the palace.

Mean time the dutcheſſes de Créqui and Richelieu eagerly contended for the firſt place, and their reſpective pretenſions divided the court. Madame de Monteſpan

teſpan was enraged, that Lauzun ſhould oppoſe her. Lauzun intreated her to abandon the intereſt of a lady who was diſliked by the king; madame Scaron uſed every argument, urged every motive, that honour and friendſhip could ſuggeſt, to prevail upon her not to give up the dutcheſs de Richelieu. Lewis, divided between his miſtreſs and his favourite, aſſaulted by oppoſite, yet equal reaſons, commanded them to unite their intereſt in favour of one perſon. Neither would yield, madame de Monteſpan, becauſe ſhe was ſecretly animated by madame Scaron, Lauzun, becauſe he had promiſed the princeſs de Montpenſier to procure the poſt for the dutcheſs de Créqui.

The king continuing irreſolute, the marchioneſs and the count were afraid that his choice would fall upon another perſon. This occaſioned an open rupture between them; the count tired his maſter with ſolicitations all day, the marchioneſs at night deſtroyed all his work. Lauzun, bold, impetuous, and revengeful, exclaimed publickly againſt madame de Monteſpan, defamed her manners, and even cenſured her beauty. She complained of theſe inſults to the king, who, to revenge her, gave the poſt ſo long, *Nov.* 21. and ſo ardently ſolicited, to the dutcheſs de Richelieu.*

At this diſapointment Lauzun's rage flamed out with more violence than before; Lewis reprimanded his favourite for his raſhneſs and want of reſpect. Lauzun intreated the king to reconcile him with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, and they both promiſed to forget what was paſſed, and an unalterable friendſhip for the future.

* If madame Scaron has contributed to it, ſhe may well be envied, her joy is the moſt ſolid and ſincere one can poſſibly have in this world. See Sevigné's letters.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Of the Count de Lauzun, *and the princeſs de* Montpenſier.

THE count of Lauzun was deſtined to experience great reverſes of fortune; unmerited favour, and undeſerved diſgrace. He was the youngeſt ſon of a family of ſome note in Gaſcony. His fortune low, his wit doubtful, his abilities very moderate. He was firſt the rival, then the confidant of his king, and very near becoming his ally. He was brought within the luſtre of a throne, only to be precipitated into a long and ſevere impriſonment, from whence he was releaſed, to have the honour of aſſiſting a monarch in his flight, and to grow old amidſt the hatred of his own age, and the contempt of ours. He was the general favourite of women, without loving any, ſuffered the higheſt fortune to eſcape him, without regreting the loſs of it; he was miſerable without guilt, and died forgotten notwithſtanding the moſt remarkable adventures.

His conqueſts over women, he might reckon by his attacks, all fell into his ſnares, and all were aſtoniſhed that they fell. Some yielded to him through frailty, others through vanity, none were jealous of him, and few were unfaithful to him. At Venice and at Florence, he was as ſucceſsful as in Paris. The queen of Portugal, who would have married him before ſhe was raiſed to a throne, was not able to renounce him afterwards.*

The princeſs of Montpenſier fell in love with him; the grandaughter of Henry IV. who had diſdained ſo many princes, and refuſed ſo many kings, ſighed at the age of forty four, for a private gentleman. The impropiety, the ſhame of ſuch a confeſſion, would doubtleſs have reſtrained this princeſs from diſcovering her love, had not her reaſon, her virtue, her pride, been all ſubjected by that moſt impetuous of all paſſions.

1671.]

* Memoirs of Montpenſier, vol. 6. page 53.

1671.] During that journey to Flanders, when Lewis in the midſt of ſhews and diverſions, formed the deſign of invading Holland, the princeſs of Montpenſier went with the court, not out of reſpect to the queen, but to be where the count of Lauzun was. Three months after the firſt converſation, ſhe declared her paſſion to him by a billet, which ſhe conveyed into his hand in the Louvre, and before two of her domeſticks: the billet contained only theſe few words, 'I 'love the count de Lauzun, and him only will I 'marry.'

The count of Lauzun, in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment at what he read, durſt not believe his eyes. The princeſs, next day, repeated to him a thouſand times, the declaration contained in her billet; he feigned to doubt her ſtill, ſhe ſought to convince him by her tears, he conjured her not to wound her fame, ſhe replied, 'the man I love is the greateſt man in the 'world to me,' he threw himſelf at her feet, and left her miſtreſs of his deſtiny.

The lovers now only thought how to obtain the king's conſent: the princeſs wrote ſeveral letters, but tore them as faſt as they were written, and durſt not venture to ſpeak in perſon to the king. The count de Lauzun was afraid that his good fortune would be oppoſed by madame de Monteſpan; to engage her intereſt, he promiſed to conclude a marriage between mademoiſelle de Thianges, her niece, and the duke de Nevers, and kept his word. The king was informed of Lauzun's aſſiduity about the princeſs de Montpenſier, and often rallied him upon it; to which the favourite always anſwered with ſo much ſubmiſſion, that madame de Monteſpan intreated the king not to hinder his advancement.

The death of Henrietta of England had given an opportunity for ſome propoſals for a marriage between the duke of Orleans and the princeſs de Montpenſier. The duke liked women too little to think of marrying an old one, and the princeſs loved Lauzun too well, not to prefer him to the greateſt monarch in the world.

Madame Scaron adviſed the marchioneſs de Monteſpan to break off this ridiculous marriage; the marchioneſs objected the promiſe ſhe had given Lauzun: Madame Scaron repreſented to her, that the haſty ſallies of indiſcreet friendſhip, ought to be corrected and repaired by reflexion, and that the king's honour ſhould have more weight with her, than gratitude, which pleaded for Lauzun, who was already powerful enough, without adding to the favour he ſtood in with the king, the reſpect and influence he muſt neceſſarily acquire by ſo great an alliance.

If this advice had been followed, it would have ſpared the king ſeveral falſe ſteps, the princeſs de Montpenſier much grief and ridicule, the count de Lauzun long misfortunes, the royal family unworthy fears, and even the nobility a great affront.

The count de Lauzun diſpatched a gentleman to the duke of Loraine, who was then diveſted of all his territories, to offer him a penſion of five hundred thouſand livres a year, if he would yield his claims to him. The duke of Loraine received this propoſal like a man who had little hope of ever recovering his dominions, and who, by his prodigality and misfortunes, was deprived of the laſt reſource of uſurers.

The princeſs de Montpenſier, condemned by her rank, and by the exceſs of her love, to the mortification of demanding a huſband, wrote a long letter to the king, full of paſſion, full of reſpect. The king anſwered her by a ſhort billet, in which he defired her not to act with precipitation in an affair of ſuch great importance. However, he at length gave his conſent, upon condition, that the relations of the count of Lauzun ſhould come in a body to aſk that favour of him, and likewiſe, that the princeſs de Montpenſier ſhould herſelf publickly requeſt him to give her a private gentleman for a huſband.

The princeſs flew to the king's apartment, and conjured him to make her happy, declaring that his refuſal would be her death. A moment afterwards entered the dukes de Créqui and Montauzur, marſhal d'Albret and the marquis de Guitry: they repreſented

to

to the king, that the dukes and peers of France were equal in rank to foreign princes, that Lauzun was worthy of the ſame title: and that after having conſented to a marriage between the ſiſter of the princeſs of Montpenſier and the duke of Guiſe, his majeſty could not deny Lauzun's requeſt without giving a ſenſible mortification to the firſt nobility of the kingdom; and that it was not the firſt time that the blood of private gentlemen had been mixed with that of emperors. The king, aſtoniſhed at the exceſſive eagerneſs his couſin had ſhewn, to get this affair terminated, ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and replied, 'ſhe is five and forty years 'of age, ſhe may do as ſhe pleaſes.'

The ardour with which they aſſured him that the poſſibility of an alliance with the blood of their monarchs, would incite the French nobility to perform every thing that was great and noble, to merit ſuch an honour; had great weight with the king. However the maxims of cardinal Richelieu were different. 'A 'prince of the blood, ſaid he, does not debaſe him-'ſelf by marrying a private gentlewoman, but a prin-'ceſs cannot, without deſcending from her rank, become the wife of a private gentleman.*' And yet a queen of France, married one.

Dec. 15, 16, 17, 18. 1670.] The marriage was now declared, the princeſs de Montpenſier, and the count de Lauzun, received the compliments of the whole court. The princeſs gave her lover two and twenty millions of livres, the contract was drawn up; but Lauzun, inſtead of concluding the marriage, amuſed himſelf with repreſenting for a ſingle day a duke of Montpenſier. This delay gave the queen, the duke of Orleans, and the prince of Condé an opportunity to break off a marriage which they thought highly diſhonourable. They remonſtrated to the king, that ſuch an alliance was injurious to the the royal family: they aſſured him, it was publickly reported, that this aſtoniſhing match was his own work, and that he was accuſed of ſacrificing his couſin to the ambition of his favourite.

* Life of madame de Longueville by Mr. de Villefore.

The king immediately ſent for Lauzun and the princeſs de Montpenſier and inſtead of ſigning their contract, commanded them to proceed no farther.

Lauzun received this order with all the reſpect, all the fortitude, all the deſpair, that his reverence for his king, his own haughtineſs of mind, and ſo great a fall could inſpire, and appeared worthy of the fortune he had loſt. The princeſs de Montpenſier burſt into tears and complaints. 'Ah! Sire, ſhe cried, what will become of 'monſieur de Lauzun? what will become of me?' Then throwing herſelf at the king's feet, and covering her face with her handkerchief, to hide her tears and confuſion; 'I act a part, added ſhe, that would cover 'me with ſhame, if the conſent you once gave, and 'have now reſumed, did not authorize it: in loving 'the count de Lauzun, I but follow your example, who 'have loved him ſo much yourſelf.' 'I will raiſe him 'to ſuch a heighth, replied the king, that he ſhall have 'no reaſon to envy the fortune of any perſon whatever, 'but, couſin, promiſe me that you will not do any 'thing in this affair without my knowledge.' 'I pro-'miſe you nothing,' replied the afflicted princeſs, and ruſhed out of the king's preſence.

She returned to her apartment overwhelmed with deſpair; madame de Nogent the ſiſter of Lauzun, who was in the ſervice of the princeſs de Montpenſier, raiſed the depreſſed ſpirits of the lovers, by propoſing to them to finiſh a marriage to which there now only wanted the ceremonies of the church, and accordingly a prieſt was procured, who gave them the nuptial benediction. Lauzun flattered himſelf that by his victories, his fidelity, and his ſubmiſſion, he ſhould be able to move the king in his favour. The princeſs depended upon her ſorrow and her tears.

It was reported that the marriage was again reſolved on, and that the king's affection for Lauzun, had carried it againſt all the arguments that had been urged, on account of the inequality between him and the princeſs. However the nobility were greatly offended, and conſtrued the breaking off the match into an injury done their order.

Lewis wrote immediately to all his ambaſſadors in foreign courts, acquainting them, that he had declared to the dukes de Créqui and Montauzier, and to the marquis de Guitry, that he never would conſent to a marriage between the princeſs de Montpenſier and any prince of the blood, but that ſhe might chuſe whomſoever ſhe pleaſed out of the French noblity, Lauzun only excepted, and that he would himſelf lead her to church.

The king, to conſole his favourite, ſent him two months afterwards a marſhal's batoon. Lauzun refuſed it with theſe words; 'I have not yet deſerved it:' He continued to viſit the princeſs de Montpenſier as frequently as uſual, notwithſtanding the conjectures his aſſiduity gave riſe to.

Among that crowd of enemies which he had drawn upon himſelf, as well by the greatneſs as the reverſes of his fortune, he had two very powerful ones: le Tellier, who never forgave him for the ſeduction of his daughter, madame de Villequier, and Louvois, who openly aſpired to the chief direction of all affairs relating to war, and who, tho' ſurrounded with flatterers, and ſlaves to his greatneſs, ſaw himſelf every day braved by Lauzun, who was ſecretly devoured by the ſame ambitious hopes.

Louvois, who had ſpies every where, was ſoon informed of every thing that paſſed in the palace of Orleans; he infuſed ſuſpicions into the king's mind that Lauzun had diſobeyed him, and the count unfortunatly confirmed thoſe ſuſpicions, by aſſuming all the haughty airs of a man, who knew he was the huſband of the proudeſt princeſs in the world.

The count de Guiche, who had been baniſhed for preſuming to love the dutcheſs of Orleans, was recalled upon condition that he would reſign his poſt of colonel of the king's guards. Lauzun durſt not venture to aſk the king for this poſt, who now treated him but with the coldneſs of decayed friendſhip, and therefore had recourſe to the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, who, he was weak enough to imagine capable of pardoning, and intreated her to aſk this poſt for him of the king. Madame de Monteſpan promiſed all he deſired, but told the

the king that monſieur de Lauzun affected more reſerve with his maſter than with her, that ſhe could not underſtand ſuch unneceſſary arts, and that a prince who had loaded him with favours, had a right to expect more frankneſs from him.

Lewis was ſurprized at the injuſtice of this conduct, artfully exaggerated by the malice of madame de Monteſpan; he took occaſion one day to mention ſeveral perſons to Lauzun, who ſolicited for the count de Guiche's employment, and aſked him if he did not wiſh for it himſelf.

Lauzun replied, that he had never entertained a thought of it, that his majeſty had already confered innumerable benefits upon him, and that he knew a thouſand others who were more worthy to ſucceed the count de Guiche than himſelf.

'This modeſty becomes you, replied the king coldly, but added he, if you really have any deſire for this poſt, why do you not open your mind freely to your friend?' Lauzun repeated that he had never thought of it. The king darting a look at him which went to his ſoul, told him he was amazed at his having dared to utter ſo impudent a falſhood, that he knew all, and ſhould from thence forward look upon him only as an impoſtor. Lauzun ſtammered out ſome excuſes, and went from the king's preſence full of rage and deſpair; the duke de Créqui met him as he left the king's apartment: 'I am the moſt unfortunate of men, ſaid he to the duke, and the beſt friend I have in the world is he who would deſtroy me.' He flew to the apartment of madame de Monteſpan, upbraided her with her treachery, ſuffered his rage to carry him even to threats, and uſed expreſſionswhich only a diſgraced favourite wouldhave uttered.

The miſtreſs ballanced a long timewhether ſhe ſhould complain of this inſult to the king, or paſs it over in ſilence. She had truſted Lauzun with an important ſecret, and it was abſolutely neceſſary that ſhe ſhould ruin him entirely, or reconcile herſelf with him; at length, reſentment carried it, and Lauzun was accuſed. After he had preſumed to raiſe his eyes to the princeſs de Montpenſier, the king's affection for him had been changed

changed to indifference; he grew contemptible after he had been convicted of a falſhood, and became odious as ſoon as he had injured her whom he loved. Lewis would have more eaſily been perſuaded to pardon any offence againſt himſelf: enraged that ſo many benefits ſhould be repaid with ſuch ingratitude, importuned by Louvois, who repreſented to him that nothing but ſevere uſage could tame that haughty ſpirit, he at length cauſed him to be arreſted and conducted to Pignerol, where the unfortunate Fouquet had been a priſoner ten years. *Decem.* 1.

During this journey, Lauzun was overwhelmed with ſuch extreme deſpair, that his attendants never quitted him a moment; they would oblige him to come out of the coach in a dangerous part of the road. 'I was 'not made, ſaid he, to ſuffer ſuch diſtreſſes. All my 'crime,' ſaid he, to the officer who guarded him, 'was 'in having a friend too great, and an enemy too pow-'erful.' When he entered his priſon, he cried out: *In ſæcula ſæculorum.*

In his cabinets were found the portraits of ladies without number, one without a head, another with the eyes out, and another with one of the hands defaced, a lock of each of his miſtreſſes hair, and a prodigious number of letters, by which Lewis learned that the ladies of his court who pretended to the moſt ſanctity and virtue, were not the leaſt frail. No one pitied him; the king ſaid nothing concerning his crime, and that ſilence ſufficiently pointed out the nature of it.

The next day the king ſent for Marſillac, and ſaid to him, 'Monſieur, I give you the government of 'Berry, which Lauzun enjoyed.' 'Sire, replied Mar-'ſillac the laws of honour are better underſtood by your 'majeſty than by me, be pleaſed only to remember that 'I was not a friend of Lauzun's, and then judge whe-'ther I ought to accept the benefit you offer me.' 'You 'are too ſcrupulous replied the king, but theſe gene-'rous ſentiments ſhall not be concealed,' then turning 'to his miniſters, he related to them this inſtance of 'extreme delicacy in Marſillac, adding, 'what 'a difference there is between him and Lauzun,

'he

'he did not deign to thank me, when I beſtowed the 'government of Berry upon him, and here is a man 'who refuſes it with the deepeſt gratitude.'

Grief made ſo ſudden an alteration in Lauzun's health, that he was ſeized with a lethargy which the phyſicians looked upon as a ſymptom of approaching death. The governor of Pignerol diſpatched a courier with an account of his death: ſix hours afterwards another courier brought the news of his return to life. The king expreſſed neither grief nor joy. The princeſs de Montpenſier oppreſt with the moſt violent grief, appeared at court with all the ſigns of indifference; every night ſhe curſed the hour when ſhe was born a princeſs, and every day by her caprice and pride made thoſe about her ſenſible how truly ſhe was one.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The diſorders of the Court.

THE example of Lewis was fatal to the manners of his court; the contagion ſpread, and love intrigues were the ſole employment of the courtiers. Madame de Soiſſons was capable of the moſt maſculine crimes to ſatisfy her ambition, and of the moſt ſcandalous exceſſes to vary her pleaſures. The marchioneſs de Coetquen enſlaved, and deceived Turenne. The cardinal Legate, intoxicated with his paſſion for the dutcheſs de Créqui, confidently ſaid to the duke, 'my pleaſure would be leſſened by one half, if I 'thought I were not underſtood.'

The duke of Orleans, more ſolicitous about the graces of his perſon than his fame, after acknowledging that he was jealous of his firſt wife, excited the ſuſpicions of his ſecond. The queen's maids of honour were too often tempted not to yield ſometimes. Thoſe of the dutcheſs of Orleans, who were diſmiſſed upon a ſuſpicion of gallantry, were conſtantly replaced by others, who, with prohibitions to pleaſe, had forms the moſt likely to diſobey. Several of our celebrated beauties carried with them into foreign courts our paſſions and our luxury.

Ma-

Mademoiſelle de Keroualle * reigned in England, with as much power as any woman could poſſeſs, who was miſtreſs to a king inceſſantly oppoſed by his parliament. Mademoiſelle de la Perouſe governed the electreſs of Bavaria, although ſhe was beloved by the elector. Mademoiſelle de la Tremouille conſoled herſelf in Denmark for having failed in her attempts upon the king's heart, by the glory of enſlaving his brother ‖, and the great chancellor †.

Louvois himſelf felt the tender paſſion: madame du Freſnoy, the wife of one of his clerks ‡, after having tried the effects of her charms upon monſieur de Villeroi, and the duke de Caderouſe, attacked the monarch, and his miniſter, was diſliked by one, and enſlaved the other. Louvois, however powerful, however independant in all things elſe, yet ſubmitted to the general law, which decrees, that the miſtreſs of a ſtateſman ſhall be his chief counſellor. That he might yield with greater decency, he thought fit to raiſe his miſtreſs, and created a poſt for her in the queen's houſhold. She was made lady of the bed: he received all petitions

---

* Louiſa Renée de Penancoët, created dutcheſs of Portſmouth in 1672, and dutcheſs d'Aubignè in 1694, this laſt title deſcended to her ſon Charles Lenox duke of Richmond: ſhe was preſented to king Charles II. by Henrietta his ſiſter. The moſt powerful of her rivals was Nell Gwin, an Engliſh actreſs, mother to the duke of St. Albans.

‖ Prince George, afterwards married to queen Anne.

† The count of Griffenfeld.

‡ Madame du Freſnoy ſups here every night, ſhe has the form of a nymph, a divinity; but madame Scaron, madame de la Fayette, and I think her inferior in beauty to madame de Grignan. Not that her complexion is leſs fine, or her mein leſs noble, but her eyes have no expreſſion, the make of her face is not to be compared to yours, her mouth is not perfect. She is ſo intent upon her own beauty, that ſhe ſpeaks but very little, yet that little ſeems to become her. Sévigne's letters, 27 Jan. 1672.

petitions from her hands; and every one courted her intereſt.

It happened one day, that a decrepit old woman preſt in among the croud which ſurrounded the king, when he was at dinner; the duke of Orleans put her back, aſking her what ſhe wanted. 'Monſieur, ſaid ſhe, I 'would intreat the king to procure me the means of 'ſpeaking to *monſeigneur de Louvois.*' 'There is ma-'dame du Freſnoy, replied the king, ſhe can do it ea-'ſier than I can.'

CHAPTER XLIX.

The diſgrace and return of madame de MONTESPAN,

1672.] MADAME de Monteſpan, no longer troubled with her huſband, ſupported by her family, and depending upon her fruitfulneſs for the preſervation of the king's affections, began to ſhew her power, and to reign with oſtentation. She had accompanied the king in his journey to Flanders the preceding year, and had ſo far overcome every principle of virtue, every nicer ſenſe of ſhame, and regard to decency, that ſhe ſhewed herſelf to the world without a bluſh, in the character of miſtreſs to the king. Till then, ſhe had appeared either uncertain of her place, or anxious for her reputation. But, ſecure of her influence over the king, ſhe threw off all reſtraint, and openly braved the queen, la Valliere, and the whole kingdom. Perhaps ſhe thought that by aſſuming airs of dignity and importance, the irregularity of her conduct might be leſs ſubjected to cenſure: perhaps ſhe feared that the king, by keeping his paſſion for her concealed, might confirm himſelf in ſcruples, which undiſſembled guilt often deſtroy. Or perhaps ſhe had till then been carried away with the pleaſure of imitating a lover, too young to know what real grandeur was, and too tender to ſolicit it. However it is certain, that ſhe at firſt reluctantly admitted, and afterwards eagerly graſped at all honours, every advantage, with

with which ambition could be ſatisfied, that repin'd at not being placed upon a throne.

The princes and great lords of the court were delighted to find their king reſtored to them, whom this ſecret intrigue had too long kept from their adorations. Their homage was now paid entirely to the marchioneſs, through her they engaged the favour of their ſovereign. Every day increaſed dependance and ſervility. All was dignity in the lover, all haughty diſtance in the miſtreſs, in the courtier all profound ſubmiſſion, reſpect, and adulation.

This was the æra of the change that was introduced in our manners, they became more eaſy, more flexible, but loſt in freedom what they gained in politeneſs.

Madame de Monteſpan endeavoured to reconcile imperious vice with humble piety. She had formed a ſet of morals for herſelf, too looſe for a chriſtian, too ſevere for a miſtreſs. Her fine hands did not diſdain to work for the poor: ſhe forced herſelf to believe that frequent alms, a conſtant attendance at divine ſervice, ſome exterior practices of devotion would purchaſe a pardon for her ſcandalous adultery. She even preſented herſelf at the holy table, favoured by ſome abſolutions, which ſhe purchaſed from mercenary, and procured by artifice from ignorant prieſts.

One day ſhe endeavoured to obtain abſolution from the curate of a village, who had been recommended to her, on account of his flexibility. 'What, ſaid this 'man of God to her, are you that marchioneſs de Mon-'teſpan, whoſe crime is an offence to the whole king-'dom? Go, madame, renounce your wicked habits, 'and then come to this awful tribunal.'

Madame de Monteſpan went away in a rage, and complained to the king of the inſult ſhe had received, demanding juſtice upon the confeſſor, as if perſevering in his duty had been a crime againſt her. The king, who was not ſure that his authority extended ſo far, as to judge of what paſſed in the ſacraments between God and man, conſulted Boſſuet, whoſe learning he reſpected, and the duke de Montauzier, whoſe ſtedfaſt virtue

he

he revered. Boſſuet without heſitating a moment, praiſed the prieſt for an act of reſolution and courage, which probably he could not have been capable of himſelf, and Montauzier replied with ſtill leſs reſerve, that madame de Monteſpan ought to thank him for having ſpared her the guilt of ſacrilege. Yet madame de Montauzier had been generally ſuſpected of rivetting the chains which her huſband would have broke.

The king, whoſe heart was formed to receive thoſe truths which ſovereigns are ſo little accuſtomed to hear, promiſed them, that as ſoon as he returned from the army, he would break off all connexion with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; he even permitted Boſſuet to write to him freely upon that ſubject: there are two of his letters to Lewis, in which he earneſtly exhorts him, by every motive of religion, every ſentiment of glory, to continue faithful to his oaths.

When the king returned from the campaign, the conteſt between love and devotion was renewed; the family of Mortemar practiſed all their arts; the marchioneſs de Monteſpan ſpread all her allurements; the devotees made pathetick remonſtrances, but the king ſtill continued irreſolute. The queſtion was, whether the miſtreſs ſhould be baniſhed from court or not, and this queſtion was diſcuſſed as a very difficult caſe of conſcience. At Paris all agreed that ſhe ought to be removed: at court opinions were divided.

The rigid caſuiſts, who were all enemies to madame de Monteſpan, declared with Boſſuet, that this correſpondence ſhould be broke off in the moſt open manner imaginable. They preached to the king, that he ought not to diſpoſe of his heart as he pleaſed: they quoted to him the maxim of the wiſe, that whoever was unwilling to yield to temptation, muſt fly from it: they repreſented to him that the crime being publick, the reparation ought to be ſo too, and gave him long tracts which he never read.

Thoſe who had more policy than rectitude, oppoſed this opinion with very ſpecious reaſons. They alledged, that ſome regard ought to be ſhewn to the honour of a woman, whoſe fault had been, to yield to an almoſt

moſt reſiſtleſs temptation; that a publick reparation of this fault would load madame de Monteſpan with infamy, and might indeed afford a uſeful leſſon to the court, but would give ſcandal to the whole kingdom. The people, they ſaid, ought not to be made acquainted with the weakneſſes of their ſovereign, the examples of the ancient church proved nothing; circumſtances were greatly altered: it was madneſs in theſe perverſe times, to think of emulating the perfection, the auſterity of that happy age, the virtues of which we were more likely to admire than hope to imitate. It was ſufficient to break off all correſpondence with madame de Monteſpan, without diſmiſſing her from her employment in the queen's houſhold: what merit would there be in the ſacrifice, if ſhe was kept at a diſtance? to ſee her in publick every day, without ſeeing her in private, was a trial worthy the great ſoul of his majeſty.

Lewis admitted this reaſoning to be juſt, it was ſuch as his own heart ſuggeſted: thoſe who were wholly diſintereſted, argued in a different manner. Of what uſe, ſaid they, will it be to remove the marchioneſs? Will not his paſſions ſoon make a new madame de Monteſpan of ſome other lady? It is neceſſary that our ſovereign ſhould have miſtreſſes, who may ſometimes tell them truths, which they would not hear from the mouth of a man, and which no man would venture to tell them.

Already ſeveral ladies made advances to the king, ſome managed their deſigns with art, others avowed them with boldneſs. Madame de Chevreuſe, whoſe perſon after being the temple, was become the tomb of pleaſures, produced madame de Luynes as a candidate for the king's heart, but ſhe had little or no wit. Madame de la Ferté engaged in the conteſt, ſhe indeed had a great deal of wit, but very little beauty. One of the courtiers was baſe enough to intreat the king would make uſe of his ſervices, if he had any deſigns upon madame de Grancey *, aſſuring him that he would employ

* Louiſa-Elizabeth Rouxel de Grancey dame d'Autour to Maria Louiſa of Orléans queen of Spain.

ploy all the authority, which as uncle to the young lady he had a right to exert, and ſolicit for him with all the zeal of one of the oldeſt and moſt faithful of his ſervants. 'Monſieur, replied the king, ſmiling, 'we are both too old, you to ſeduce a girl of fifteen, 'and I to love her.

While meaſures were taken to remove madame de Monteſpan from court, ſhe appeared there with all the additional charms which long abſence beſtows upon an object who has been once ardently loved. The king fled from her, and ſhe avoided him without any appearance of affectation, yet they always met. They ſeemed ſolicitous to ſhun, yet were conſtantly approaching each other; and, unperceived by themſelves, they met again, and bluſhed.

Love revived in their hearts, their eyes ſaid a thouſand ſoft things, ſhame ſeparated them once more, tenderneſs brought them again together; one moment's converſation at a window deſtroyed all the labour of Boſſuet. Ah! what eloquence is ſo powerful as the language of two charming eyes.

CHAPTER L.

Madame Scaron's *journey to* Antwerp.

1674.] MEAN time the duke du Maine grew tall, lovely, ſenſible, but gave plain indications that he would be lame. He was born perfectly ſtrait, but at three years old, when he was cutting his double teeth, he was ſeized with ſuch violent convulſions that one of his legs was contracted by them, and was much ſhorter than the other.

All the art of the faculty at Paris had been exhauſted without ſucceſs, d'Aquin firſt phyſician to his majeſty, adviſed him to ſend the child to Antwerp, to be put under the care of a phyſician there, who was in great eſteem for his extraordinary abilities in his profeſſion. Either to avoid expence, or to prevent inconveniencies, the Child was not to be known. Madame Scaron was directed to call herſelf the marchioneſs

de

de Surgeres of the province of Poictou, the prince paſſed for her ſon; however the attendants of the duke du Maine were ſo numerous, that it was eaſily perceived his parents were of a diſtinguiſhed rank. Madame Scaron betrayed the ſecrecy that was enjoined her, by her extreme ſolicitude, to relieve all the diſtreſt perſons who offered themſelves to her compaſſion, and by the care ſhe took to make the young prince ſenſible to the pleaſure of beſtowing. Having provided herſelf with permiſſion from Rome, ſhe cauſed the tabernacles of the churches that were in her rout to be opened, and gave ſilver boxes for the pix to thoſe that had none before.

The remedies of the empirick were of a violent nature, madame Scaron could not ſupport the ſight of the preparations only; a perſon who was preſent obſerving her terrors and anxiety, ſaid, 'We do not ſee the father of this child, but this lady is doubtleſs the mother.' The little duke had already ſenſibility enough to be aſhamed of ſhewing his infirmities to a foreigner. 'Monſieur, ſaid he to the phyſician, I was not born thus, you ſee my mother; and my father is very far from being lame.'

The quack forced nature, he lengthened the limb, but did not give it ſtrength, and ſent the duke back to Paris with an aſſurance that he would be no longer lame, but with ſymptoms that ſhewed a greater diſpoſition to it than before.*

The care ſhe had taken of the prince during this journey, did not go unrewarded. The king caſting his eyes upon the liſt of penſions, ſaw two thouſand franks for madame Scaron, he eraſed that article, and put two thouſand crowns in the place of it. This benefaction, by ſecuring her the means of living agreeably in the city, bound her ſtill faſter to the court, and indicated new favours,

* Madame de Maintenon, before the child was acknowleged, carried him to Antwerp, to ſhew him to a phyſician who was famous for curing lameneſs, but he came back in a worſe condition than he went. *Memoirs of the princeſs de Montpenſier.*

favours, and more laſting chains; the ſociety of her former friends was now more eagerly ſought than ever, ſhe gave them all her leiſure hours, and found ſo much pleaſure in their converſation, that ſhe regretted ſhe had not more to give.

The king did not ſeem to have the ſame diſlike to the marchioneſs de Surgeres, as he had ſhewn to madame Scaron. She had been repreſented to him as a fantaſtick, vain-glorious woman, who muſt be ſoothed with adulation, and reſpect. He found her modeſt, obliging, mild, and inſinuating; he now admitted her to his private parties of pleaſure, at the intreaty of madame de Monteſpan, who obſerving this growing eſteem foretold him, that when madame Scaron was better known to him, it would be greatly encreaſed.

The duke du Maine, whoſe birth was now almoſt publickly known, contributed to fix the king's good opinion of madame Scaron, by a very lively and very ſeaſonable anſwer he one day made him. Lewis, like all the Bourbons, was a very tender father; he did not diſdain to play with his little ſon, and being charmed with the ſprightlineſs of his wit, he could not help telling him that he was very ſenſible. 'How ſhould I be 'otherwiſe, replied the child, when I am educated by 'wiſdom herſelf.' This anſwer procured the governeſs a hundred thouſand francs.

However the king did not yet perfectly underſtand her character, he rather ſuffered than invited her to his private ſuppers with madame de Monteſpan: what madame d'Hudicourt had ſaid of her, made an Impreſſion which was not yet effaced; he thought her vain, oſtentatious, fond of exalting her own, and leſſening the underſtanding of every other perſon: but after converſing with her frequently, he was ſurpriſed to find in her ſo much good ſenſe, with ſuch engaging modeſty, ſuch humble diffidence; he believed perhaps that ſhe conſtrained herſelf before him, and perhaps he forced himſelf to believe ſo.

The

The duke du Maine, and the count de Vexin * his brother, were legitimated. The duke, young as he was, had the poſt of colonel general of the Swiſs, and the count was named to the abbey of St. Germain des-Prés. They at length appeared openly as the king's ſons, at a ball given by the dutcheſs de la Valliere. † So numerous, and ſo beautiful an offspring was a pleaſing ſpectacle to Lewis. He beheld at once a dauphin of whom already great hopes were conceived, mademoiſelle de Blois, and the count de Vermandois, his children by madame de la Valliere; the former all beauty and grace, the latter who already felt that he was the ſon of a king. The Duke du Maine whoſe vivacity ſhewed that he would not halt in the race of glory. And the count de Vexin, to whom an Italian aſtrologer had predicted that he would one day ſway the ſceptre of Poland.

The education of the duke de Maine was entirely truſted to madame Scaron; ſhe choſe all his precepts and his maſters, ſhe divided her authority with monſieur le Ragois, nephew to the abbe Gobelin, a man of great learning and rectitude, one who had more wiſdom than wit, and capable of extreme application; in a word, a man exactly qualified for the preceptor of a prince, who ought to merit by his virtue, the rank fortune had placed him in. When a more advanced age, and a better ſtate of health, rendered the little duke more capable of inſtruction, ſhe put him under the care of Chevreau, the ſame who wrote a hiſtory of the world, and converted in three weeks the princeſs Palatine who was deſtined for the wife of the duke of Orleans.

Madame

* Lewis Céſar de Bourbon, Count de Vexin, born June the 20th 1672. Named to the abbey St. Germain des-Pres, he died January 10, 1683.

† The little princes are not yet ſeen, the eldeſt is with his father and mother, he is very handſome, but no one is allowed to ſee him. Madame Scaron alſo ſeldom appears in publick. Letters from madame de Sèvignè January 1. 1674.

Madame Scaron reſerved to herſelf the pleaſing taſk of forming his mind to rectitude, his heart to benevolence, and ſhe ſucceeded in it. The young prince had very happy inclinations, great quickneſs of apprehenſion, great candor and ſenſibility, and an extreme attachment to his governeſs; he was dearer to her than to his mother, and he loved her infinitely more: this reciprocal tenderneſs, proved very advantageous to the prince, who owed the great fortune he afterwards poſſeſſed to a woman, who had a thouſand times ſaid to him, 'When you are a great man you 'will forget me.*

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan ſome times took the trouble to examine into the methods of her childrens education, ſhe would make alterations, diſapprove of the plan already eſtabliſhed, but was particularly ſolicitous to leſſen the expence; for madame de Monteſpan had all the avarice of a perſon, obliged by her ſituation to live with a magnificence her inclinations diſavowed.

The governeſs ſaw with extreme uneaſineſs theſe uſeleſs innovations, ſhe complained that the children were ruined, that they wanted neceſſaries, that they were brought up like the ſons of a tradeſman, and threatened to leave them entirely to the direction of their mother. Theſe quarrels which always began with an emulative tenderneſs for the children, ended with ſevere reproaches on the part of madame de Monteſpan, and on that of Madame Scaron with deſigns and ſchemes for quitting the court. The mother alledged that no one had a right to oppoſe her in the education of her own children. The governeſs anſwered 'that they were the king's, and, ſince their legitima-'tion, the children of France.'

Madame de Monteſpan revenged herſelf on madame Scaron, for this oppoſition to her will, by excluding her from thoſe private parties with the king, to which ſhe had at firſt introduced her: madame Scaron more con-

*Memoirs of the marquis de la Sare, manuſcript of mademoiſelle d'Aumale.

concerned at the effects of her reſentment than at her reſentment itſelf, refuſed to go when ſhe was again invited; ſhe thought it ignominious to be the ſport of a woman whom ſhe ſcorned to ſooth. The marchioneſs enraged at the haughty returns ſhe made to her conceſſions, prejudiced the king againſt her, and Madame Scaron who was extremely ſenſible of injuries, and naturally paſſionate, ſometimes made herſelf amends, for the painful reſtraint ſhe had obſerved, and gave free courſe to her anger. The miſtreſs complained to the king, the governeſs to the abbé Gobelin, who obliged her to remain at court, with a hope of procuring a good benefice for himſelf, and a large penſion for her.

Theſe two ladies were as quickly reconciled as ſet at variance, they were not able either to live together or to part: madame Scaron inſiſted that the marchioneſs ſhould treat her, if not as her equal, at leaſt as her friend: the marchioneſs would ſometimes, in the warmth of confidence, lay her dignity aſide; at other times ſhe would make madame Scaron ſenſible of the immenſe diſtance there was between her who gave birth to princes, and her who educated them.

The king weary at length of theſe continual diſputes ſaid to madame de Monteſpan, 'if ſhe diſpleaſes you, 'why do you not then diſmiſs her, are you not the mi-'ſtreſs?' The marchioneſs thought it leſs difficult to appeaſe madame Scaron, than to find another fit for her place; but ſhe took care to let her know, that the king had left her at liberty to revenge herſelf as ſhe pleaſed. Madame Scaron, deeply wounded at a ſpeech which ſubjected her to the tyranny of another, declared in plain terms that ſhe would retire from court. Her friends earneſtly intreated her not to fly the fortune that awaited her; madame de Monteſpan alarmed at her ſteadineſs, prevailed upon the families of Albret and Richelieu, to uſe every motive the intereſt and happineſs of their friend could ſuggeſt to engage her to ſtay, but all their endeavours were fruitleſs, the king had affronted her, the king muſt give her ſatisfaction; ſhe yielded to his intreaties and promiſed to go to Barege with the duke du Maine.

The king began to entertain ſentiments of the higheſt reſpect and eſteem for a woman, who would acknowledge a dependance upon none but himſelf; he no longer dreaded the converſation of the *wit*, he delivered her from the yoke which the marchioneſs had impoſed upon her, and would not ſuffer her to render an account of the prince's education to any other but himſelf; in theſe interviews he found her ſo amiable, ſo ſenſible and unaffected, that his former prejudices were entirely eraſed.

Thus did madame Scaron make her way inſenſibly to the king's heart. Some will have it that the affection of Lewis for her was ſuddenly and by chance entertained. This anecdote may be found every where, and ſhould not have a place here but to be refuted.

The king happening once to put one of thoſe tender queſtions to madame de Monteſpan which ſuppoſe that a prince may be loved for himſelf, but can never be ſure of it, the favourite anſwered him as all women anſwer their lovers. The king quitted her, ſaying with ſome appearance of diſcontent, that ſhe confounded ambition with love. Madame de Monteſpan, alarmed at an expreſſion which inſinuated a doubt of her ſincerity, would not ſuffer the king to ſleep upon ſo dangerous a notion; ſhe wrote to him in order to undeceive him, but not being ſatisfied with her letter, ſhe had recourſe to madame Scaron, who immediately compoſed one for her with ſuch propriety of thought and expreſſion, that madame de Monteſpan, quite charmed with it, copied and ſent it to the king. Lewis was in raptures; he beſtowed ſo many praiſes upon it, that madame de Monteſpan, aſhamed of taking to herſelf the merit of another, confeſſed that ſhe had borrowed the pen of madame Scaron. The king was concerned to find, that his miſtreſs had been obliged to have recourſe to another hand, to aſſure him that ſhe loved him; he deſired to ſee the perſon who was capable of writing ſo well, the eaſy and elegant converſation of madame Scaron, anſwered the idea her letters had given him of her wit, and his prejudices againſt her vaniſhed

ed that moment *. This ſtory was certainly the invention of ſome perſon who was not acquainted either with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, or madame Scaron.

Madame de Monteſpan did not need to borrow the pen of any other perſon; ſhe wrote with a ſpirit like that of the marchioneſs de Sévigné, and if ſhe had not the ſtyle of her family, love had given her his own. Madam Scaron declared ſo poſitively againſt every thing that had the appearance of gallantry, that it was not at all probable ſhe would deſcend to ſo faulty a compliance. Wit indeed readily aſſumes the appearance of every paſſion, as it becomes every ſituation, but the piety which ſhe made profeſſion of would not admit of ſuch a diſguiſe.

Madame Scaron ſuffered enough, from the neceſſity which obliged her to conceal her contempt for the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; ſhe thought by accepting invitations to the entertainments ſhe gave the king, that ſhe aſſociated herſelf in her crimes, although her confeſſor declared, that one may without offending God live with thoſe who daily offend him.

Her behaviour was ſo well calculated to inſpire reſpect and eſteem, that the king diverting himſelf one day in the country, with drawing the ladies chairs from under them, paſſed by madame Scaron, ſaying, 'I 'dare not be ſo free with her.'

She often earneſtly intreated madame de Monteſpan to break off all correſpondence with the king. The Marchioneſs promiſed every thing ſhe required, would be reſerved and cruel for a whole month, and ſeemed to relinquiſh the ſin for a time, only to return to it with higher taſte.

* See madame du Noyer's letters, deſpiſed, and yet oppoſed by all the hiſtorians. Gayot de Pitaval, author of the *bibliotheque des gens de cour*, gives us this ſuppoſed letter, wrote by madame Scaron for the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; he does not tell us from whence he had it, but the ſtyle of it proves that it is his own compoſition.

She would ſometimes torment madame Scaron with all the inſolent capriciouſneſs of her temper, to puniſh her for a virtue which ſeemed tacitly to reproach her frailty: in an old woman ſhe could have pardoned advice and examples, which became inſults in one who was but five years older than herſelf, who had leſs beauty indeed, but as many graces, and more wit.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan concealed her irregularities with as much care, as madame Scaron her advancement in piety; the marchioneſs dreaded even her looks; ſhe once wrote a billet to madame Scaron beſeeching her to come and ſee her; ſhe was then lying-in, and added theſe words, 'I am very deſirous 'of ſeeing you, tho' I dread your preſence. I in-'treat you for God's ſake do not roll your large black 'eyes upon me in the condition I now am.'

To ſoften the ſeverity of a virtue, which was continually importuning her with reproofs and admonitions, ſhe performed ſome acts of charity that were recommended to her by madame Scaron. She protected the community of ſaint Joſeph, but there was ſo much avarice mingled with her benefactions, that it was eaſily ſeen ſhe feared madame Scaron more than ſhe loved the poor: She gave to a certain church a golden lamp, but it was ſo light that madame Scaron bluſhed when ſhe preſented it, and there was a neceſſity for filling it with ſand that it might not vibrate with the air.

One day when madame Scaron went to church with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, ſhe ſaw her enter a confeſſionary, and entertained hopes of her converſion; ſhe was fully convinced her wiſhes were anſwered, when ſhe obſerved the penitent to hear maſs with the deepeſt attention and ſeeming advantage, and that ſhe received the communion with fervour. When they came out of the church, madame Scaron expreſſed great joy at her ſincere return to God: Madame de Monteſpan, without anſwering her, ordered her coachman gayly to carry her to Verſailles. 'Is it poſſible, 'ſaid madame Scaron, that you who have juſt re-'ceived your creator, will go and throw yourſelf into 'the arms of a man? Ah! Madame, at leaſt fear the 'devil,

'devil, if you do not love God.' Madame de Monteſpan ſighed, but did not alter her reſolution.

She ſought to deceive herſelf by practiſing thoſe duties of religion, which derive their chief merit from an uniform life of holineſs. She valued herſelf upon being extremely regular in the exerciſes preſcribed by the church. On faſt days ſhe would have the bread ſhe eat weighed, that it might not exceed a certain quantity. Madame Scaron laughed at this ſolicitude about trifles. 'Do you believe, ſaid madam de Mon-'teſpan to her, that becauſe I commit one ſin I will 'be guilty of all? Father Feuillet * would have an-'ſwered, Madam, eat beef and be a chriſtian.'

CHAPTER LI.

The dutcheſs de la Valliere *turns Carmelite.*

MADAME de la Valliere no longer expected to regain a heart which was confirmed by time in indifference: ſhe now thought only of atoning for ſins, which, happily for her ſalvation, ſhe could no more commit. Every day, for many anxious months, ſhe had curſed that court where her honour, her peace, had been loſt, yet had not power to leave it. The deſire of ſeeing her children ſettled, the pleaſure of ſtill beholding the prince, to whom ſhe had ſacrificed all, or perhaps ſome remains of hope, had retained her.

The count de Lauzun would have married her, ſhe diſmiſſed him with indignation: the duke de Longueville was in love with her, ſhe forbad him even to hope: ſhe thought that God alone ought to fill that place in her heart which the king had ſo long poſſeſſed. In her, all was to be uncommon, all worthy of admiration; no woman had ever loved with more delicacy, no one ever puniſhed herſelf more ſeverely

* Confeſſor to the dutcheſs of Orleans.

for having loved; madame de la Valliere was formed to be a model for the miſtreſſes of kings.

A pious friar receiving one day a conſiderable ſum of money from her for a very uſeful eſtabliſhment, ſaid to her, 'Madame, you are ſo charitable, that God will 'certainly have pity on you; you have given ſcandal 'to the world, you will one day edify it.' Although theſe words awakened her remorſe, yet they gave her joy, and God, who at firſt ſeemed but to ſlightly touch her heart, rewarded her obedience to theſe faint motions of his grace, by giving them, at length, power enough to triumph over all the allurements of ſin.

She left St. Germains privately, and ſhut herſelf up in Chaillot, from whence ſhe wrote a letter to the king, ſuch as paſſion, deſpair and piety dictated. She employed the marſhal de Bellefonds to deliver this letter to the king, intreating him to tell his majeſty, that after having loſt his heart, ſhe would have quitted the court, if ſhe could have prevailed upon herſelf to live without ſeeing him; that ſhe had been long influenced by that fatal weakneſs, and had, with great difficulty, taken a reſolution to make a ſacrifice of herſelf to God; that the remains of her paſſion ſhould ſerve to heighten her penitence, and that after having given him her youth, the reſt of her life was not too much to be ſpent in the care of her ſalvation.

The king was greatly affected with this letter; he ſent monſieur Colbert to her at Chaillot, with an earneſt requeſt that ſhe would inſtantly return: ſhe obeyed, and madame de Monteſpan came to meet her with open arms, and eyes bathed in tears.

The dutcheſs de la Valliere tenderly embraced her rival, and conjured her to permit the king to be innocent. Lewis talked to her an hour in private, approved of her deſign, but intreated her to put off the execution of it till another time, and came out of his cloſet, with his eyes ſtill wet with tears. Madame de la Valliere declared to him, that ſhe was abſolutely reſolved to retire from the world: 'I know my own heart, ſaid 'ſhe, I doubt its firmneſs, it is neceſſary it ſhould be 'ſubjected to a voluntary ſlavery, it is the beſt uſe it 'can make of freedom.'

The

The king repreſented to her the conſequences of a perpetual engagement, the delicacy of her conſtitution, and that her charity could be more extenſive in the world than in a cloiſter. 'I have taken my reſo-'lution too late for my honour, anſwered ſhe, but I 'flatter myſelf it is not too late for my ſalvation.'

Lewis endeavoured to perſuade her, ſince he could gain nothing elſe, to chuſe an order leſs auſtere than that ſhe had fixed upon, or elſe that ſhe would exerciſe her virtues in the government of a religious community. 'Alas! anſwered ſhe, ſighing, can I, who 'have loſt myſelf, be capable of guiding others?

The courtiers aſſigned a very different motive for the frequent journies of the dutcheſs to Chaillot. They ſuſpected that ſhe was making uſe of all the arts of a refined coquetry, either to regain the king's heart, or to gratify her revenge, by diſengaging him at leaſt from madame de Monteſpan; but they were deceived: religion was in full poſſeſſion of her ſoul, and ſhe had abſolutely determined to take the veil. One day, when the king was gone to the chace, ſhe opened her mind freely to madame Scaron, as one whom ſhe thought the beſt qualified, to judge candidly of a reſolution, which is oftener ſuggeſted by deſpair, than produced by repentance.

Madame Scaron trembled at the mention of turning Carmelite. 'It is a deſign, reſumed the dutcheſs, 'that I have long entertained, and to prepare myſelf 'for the auſterities of the order, I am reſolved to enter 'into, I wear conſtantly a ſhift of hair: one can never 'ſufficiently expiate the crime of having loved too 'well.'

Madame Scaron conjured her to examine herſelf well, ſhe ſhewed her all the conſequences of taking ſuch a dangerous ſtep: 'How can you, ſaid ſhe to ma-'dame de la Valliere, who, from your infancy, have 'been accuſtomed to luxury and pleaſures, ſupport 'the auſtere life of a Carmelite? Ah! madame, re-'plied the dutcheſs, pointing to the king and madame 'de Monteſpan, who were juſt returned, I need only 'recall to my remembrance the affliction theſe two

' perſons have given me to make me ſuffer all others ' with patience.'

Madame de la Valliere executed this deſign with all the magnanimity of a hero: the whole court would be witneſs of the ſacrifice, the queen herſelf was preſent at it. The victim never appeared more lovely than in the inſtant when ſhe was immolated: her beauty ſurprized all who beheld her: the ſermon, preached by monſieur Boſſuet upon that occaſion, ſurprized no one; the courtiers burſt into tears; madame de la Valliere pronounced the vows which ſecluded her for ever from the world, with the ſame graces, the ſame ardour, the ſame ſerenity, with which ſhe had a thouſand times ſworn to Lewis an eternal love.

From that moment ſhe ſuffered no regret for the world ſhe had quitted, to diſturb her repoſe; ſhe breathed not a ſigh for the prince ſhe had ſo fervently loved; ſhe wept only for her ſins, and loved nothing but God; ſhe paraphraſed that beautiful pſalm in which David deplores ſins of a more criminal nature; the ſentiments of faith, of love, of contrition, expreſſed by this penitent monarch, were greatly below thoſe which the ſad remembrance of her frailty, more excuſable than that of Bathſheba, inſpired. She paſſed five and thirty years in theſe auſterities, under the name of ſiſter Louiſa of the houſe of Mercy, greater in the eyes of the devout, and even in thoſe of the king, in her penitential habit of humiliation, at the feet of the altar, than when ſeated near the throne, ſhe ſaw a croud of mercenary flatterers tremble at her looks. Her pleaſures had made up all her affliction, her ſuffering made all her joy.*

The

* She entered her noviciate June 2d, 1674. took the veil June 4th, 1675. and died June 6th, 1710. She gave all her eſtates to Mary Anne of Bourbon her daughter, born at Vincennes October 2d, 1666, legitimated in 1667, married January 16th, 1680, to Lewis Armand, prince of Conti, who died without iſſue in 1685. The princeſs died in 1739. The princeſs of

The anxiety of a mother interrupted the tranquillity of her retreat. The count de Vermandois her ſon, whom Lewis loved with the fondeſt affection, had ſuffered himſelf to be corrupted by his paraſites and favourites, and carried away by the firſt paſſions of youth, thought every thing was permitted to him. His behaviour had all the haughtineſs of a prince, his conduct all the diſſoluteneſs of the moſt abandoned profligate: being diſcovered in ſome ſhameful exceſſes, he received a command from the king not to appear before him; his domeſticks were all diſmiſſed, and he was confined to his apartment, not ſuffered to ſee any perſon whatever, or go any where but to the academy, or to hear maſs. Siſter Louiſa could not hear of theſe diſorders without being pierced with grief. Great pains were taken with the prince to bring him to a ſenſe of his faults; he made a general confeſſion, appeared very devout, but was not reformed.

1683.] The king however pardoned him all; the count de Vermandois attended him to the ſiege of Courtray; he gave proofs of uncommon courage, gained the hearts of the ſoldiers by his liberality, and excited the jealouſy of the dauphin, with whom he quarrelled frequently. This, ſays the princeſs de Montpenſier, in her memoirs, is one of thoſe hiſtories which we can know but imperfectly, and which is generally concealed with great care. It was given out in the camp, that the count de Vermandois died in the night, *Nov.* 18. ſome ſaid of a malignant fever, ſome of the ſmall-pox, and by others it was reported, that his death was occaſioned by having drank too large a quantity of Aquavitæ.

of Conti gave the dutchy of Vaujour to the marquis de la Valliere her uncle. Madame de la Valliere had three ſons, one died July 15th, 1666, before he was legitimated, and was interred at St. Euſtache: the other, ſays the princeſs de Montpenſier in her memoirs, thought his mother had been ſtruck with lightening, and died of the fright: the third was the count de Vermendois, admiral of France.

Nov. 26.] The body of the count de Vermandois was tranſported to Arras and interred without any pomp in the cathedral church. But very early in the morning a litter was ſeen to come out of the camp, which carried, it was ſaid, the military cheſt: this litter took a bye road, and it was belived conveyed a priſoner of great conſequence.

Madame de la Valliere was informed of her ſon's death by monſieur Boſſuet. 'Muſt I then, ſaid ſhe, 'lament the death of a ſon, whoſe birth I have not 'yet ceaſed to weep for?' His underſtanding and his conduct, according to the princeſs de Montpenſier, were differently repreſented, but it appears by all the memoirs of that time, that no one doubted of his death.

The author of the *ſecret memoirs of Perſia*, a book which is equally filled with truth and falſehood, relates as a certainty, that the count de Vermandois was fifteen years before conducted privately to the Baſtile, with his face covered with an iron maſque. Monſieur de Voltaire has ſince related this fact with ſeveral circumſtances, that do not greatly differ from thoſe of the firſt author, and which ſeem to remove all doubt, that this priſoner was the count de Vermandois.

All I have been able to collect from the enquiries I have made into this uncommon incident is, that in reality there was a ſtate priſoner in the Baſtile, who always wore an iron maſque, his perſon tall and well made, his age about fifty. That before he was brought to the Baſtile he had been confined in Pignerol, and in the iſle of St. Margeret; that he died September 1703, and was interred in Saint Paul's church; and that ſome years afterwards a vault in the church of Courtray being opened, a coffin was found in it filled with ſand.* It is indeed aſtoniſhing, that a fact which muſt have been known to ſo many perſons, and ſuſpected by many more, ſhould be at preſent not only a ſecret, but almoſt a problem.

CHAP.

* It is obſervable that almoſt all hiſtorians ſay that the body of the count de Vermandois was carried to Arras.

CHAPTER LII.

The purchaſe of Maintenon.

MADAME Scaron perceived that ſhe became every day more agreeable to the king, and was every day more hated by the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; but her happineſs was momentary, her uneaſineſs of long continuance. Madame de Monteſpan would ſhut herſelf up with her in her own apartment, and be inacceſſible to every other perſon, that ſhe might give free courſe to the ſpleen with which ſhe was devoured. If madame Scaron, to avoid theſe diſagreeable converſations, pretended indiſpoſition or buſineſs, her excuſes were not admitted; madame Monteſpan would neither allow her to be ſick, or to be devout.

Madame Scaron thus ſubjected to continual uneaſineſs, which pride without doubt augmented, having no perſon in whom ſhe could confide but the abbé Gobelin, from whom ſhe received conſolations almoſt as ſad as the grievances ſhe lamented, ſhe was a thouſand times tempted to appeal to the king: her gratitude, her delicacy would not permit her to complain of her friend, ſhe therefore ſometimes entertained a deſign of purchaſing an eſtate, and ſometimes of throwing herſelf into a convent, but to day the conſideration of her age, and the ſmallneſs of her fortune, to morrow an obliging ſpeech from the king, or an inſtance of confidence and friendſhip in the favourite, always ſome reflection or ſome incident, came in the way to diſconcert her ſchemes. Struggling inceſſantly with oppoſite deſires, in the tumult of the world, ſhe ſighed for a convent; in the ſilence of ſolitude, ſhe languiſhed for the pleaſures of the court.

That languor, that reſtleſneſs which followed her every where, that propenſity to deſpiſe all ſhe poſſeſſed, and eager deſire for every thing ſhe had not, thoſe inquietudes, that impetuoſity, which no one obſerved,

ſerved, but which ſhe ſo often diſcovered in herſelf, convinced her that God alone could fill the vacuity in the heart of his creature. Incapable of enjoying proſperity, ſhe was never to be ſatisfied: a ſprightlineſs often forced, but which always ſeemed eaſy and natural, made her appear agreeable at the expence of her heart, which was continually rebelling, and was continually ſubdued. The misfortune of being the moſt diſcontented woman in the court, was recompenſed by the glory of being the moſt pleaſing.

Her anxious ſolicitude for the duke du Maine, increaſed in proportion as the time drew near, when he was to be taken out of her hands. The king going one day into his childrens apartment, found madame Scaron alone with them, ſupporting the duke du Maine, who was ill of a fever, with one hand, with the other rocking mademoiſelle de Nantes, who lay in a cradle, and the count de Vexin ſleeping upon her knees. The wom enattendants had all ſunk under the fatigue; madame Scaron had watched three nights ſucceſſively, with theſe ſick children, yet ſtill thought ſhe had not done enough. The king ſent her immediately an hundred thouſand francs.

This new benefaction could not fix her in the court; ſhe remained firm in her reſolutions to leave it, but her delicacy ſtill ſuggeſted new cauſe of delay; ſhe dreaded that the king would ſuſpect her of a mercenary, or artificial zeal, in the ſervice of his children, ſhe was afraid of embroiling herſelf with madame de Monteſpan, whom the publick would conſider as the firſt ſource of the king's liberality towards her. However madame Scaron had at leaſt the ſatisfaction of declaring with truth, that madame de Monteſpan was neither her miſtreſs or benefactreſs.

Although ſhe was only retained by her deſire of pleaſing the king, her chains were not leſs heavy for being voluntary; ſhe had ſought a ſecurity againſt ſlavery, and ſhe found only a ſlavery more confirmed. Having reſolved to purchaſe an eſtate, either to live upon it in freedom, or to take a name from it, for that

that of Surgeres, which ſhe had borne during her journey to Antwerp, had increaſed her averſion for her own; ſhe treated for the fief of d'Aubigné in Anjou, the firſt inheritance of her anceſtors. The lands of Maintenon were propoſed to her, a noble and fine eſtate, a magnificent caſtle, in a moſt beautiful country, at the extremity of a large town, and not more than fourteen leagues diſtance from Paris, and ten from Verſailles. The ſituation tempted her, and the bargain was concluded for two hundred and fifty thouſand livres.*

The lands of Maintenon produced only nine or ten thouſand livres a year, but madame Scaron carried thither that ſpirit of method and oeconomy, which ſhe had acquired in poverty; ſhe prevailed upon ſome Flemiſh artiſts, to form there manufactures of lace, and ſettled Normans upon her lands, whoſe buſineſs was to make linen cloth. By theſe uſeful eſtabliſhments, ſhe increaſed the revenue of her eſtate, to fifteen or ſixteen thouſand livres. Upon her firſt taking poſſeſſion of it, ſhe ſaid, 'Here will I die.' This was the only eſtate ſhe ever poſſeſſed, in a heighth of favour, that afforded her the means of purchaſing immenſe ones.

This lordſhip† had formerly belonged to the family of Angennes. The marchioneſs de Maintenon, being importuned by her creditors, went to Martinico, made eſtabliſhments there, and ended her days in the very houſe from whence madame Scaron came to purchaſe her eſtate.

Thoſe few leiſure hours with which the king or the marchioneſs de Monteſpan indulged madam Scaron, were employed in viewing Maintenon, and planning improvements there: ſhe embelliſhed the caſtle, ſhe eſtabliſhed

---

* December 27, 1674.

† It was erected into a marquiſate, and peerage in 1688, and now belongs to the houſe of Noailles, and produces with the acquiſitions, that have been ſince made, fifty thouſand livres a year: it is intailed upon the community of St. Cyr.

eſtabliſhed ſchools, but ſhe was particularly ſolicitous to form manufactures, and ſo render hoſpitals unneceſſary, ſince all the poor might find ſufficient employment in them. She looked upon all her vaſſals as her children; ſhe often remitted thoſe injurious claims, which force and length of time have conſecrated to juſtice: her ſteward, in one of his letters to her, expreſſes himſelf thus; 'It muſt be acknowledged, madam, that for a 'woman of wit, you are very ſimple.'

Her extreme eagerneſs to improve her eſtate was often oppoſed, and her deſigns delayed: ſhe carried on works there, but could not obtain a ſingle day to go and give her orders concerning them. The king, intoxicated with the charms of her converſation, often ſpent whole hours in private with her, and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. Sometimes he would ſubmit the little diſputes he had with his miſtreſs to her arbitration. 'Your majeſty is to blame in this caſe, ſaid 'ſhe to him, one day with a graceful frankneſs, but 'there is nothing to hinder you from being always in 'the right.' Madame de Monteſpan looked on her with ſurpriſe and anger. 'Certainly, madam, added 'madame Scaron, if the king is willing to reform, you 'ought not to hinder him.'

Feb. 4. 1675.] The king perceiving her to be greatly pleaſed with the acquiſition of her eſtate, called her publickly madame de Maintenon. By ſome it was imagined that this change of name had been concerted between the king and her. Her friends reproached her with deſpiſing the name of her huſband. Her enemies reported, that ſhe was wholly taken up with trifles, and her new grandeur. 'She muſt then, 'ſays madame de Sevigné in one of her letters, be 'greatly altered.'

She was ſometimes in whiſpers called madame de *Maintenant*; but conſcious of the innocence, and rectitude of her own heart, ſhe ſeemed to be innocent of the malicious cenſures of the publick, and now ſigned *Maintenon*: hitherto ſhe had always ſigned d'Aubigné.

This change of name was of greater uſe to her than ſhe herſelf could have foreſeen. How could ſhe have raiſed

raiſed herſelf to the rank ſhe was afterwards ſeen in, with the name of Scaron, which always preſented the king with a mean and burleſque idea? How could the great, the awful Lewis have required the reſpect and veneration of his ſubjects, for a woman, whoſe name itſelf was a jeſt. All the reſerve, the dignity of the widow, could not efface the impreſſion made by the remembrance of the burleſque huſband. It was neceſſary therefore, that madame de Maintenon ſhould make madame Scaron be forgot.

CHAPTER LIII.

The retreat of Madame de Monteſpan.

THE enſuing lent produced a ſurpriſing revolution in the court. The king reſolved to paſs it at the ancient caſtle of Verſailles, that he might more regularly attend the ſermons, of which, however, he was not yet willing to profit. He gave orders to the archbiſhop of Paris to ſend him for the offices of the holy week, ſome prieſts of the congregation of the miſſion, that he might make a trial of a body, to which he intended to give the care of the pariſh of Verſailles.

Theſe miſſionaries performed their duty like men who had never before been at court. The preachers alarmed all the conſciences of their hearers, and the rigid confeſſors did not contribute to eaſe them. The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was racked with remorſe, and the king appeared in the queen's apartment with the eyes of a man who had been weeping, and was not ſorry to have it thought ſo.

Madame d'Hudicourt had returned to Verſailles, to ſee what effect the ſermon upon forgiveneſs of injuries would produce. The favourite permitted her preſence there, madame de Maintenon had embraced her, the whole court was ſurpriſed at this apparition. Impelled by the ſecret workings of Grace, or influenced by the prevailing taſte of the court, madame d'Hudicourt began to be religious, and had reformed her conduct, her

her dreſs, and her converſation. Madame de Monteſpan renewed her former intimacy with her, that ſhe might have a tractable devotee to oppoſe to the inflexible madame de Maintenon. The marchioneſs ſtill trembled, leſt the king ſhould, through his ſcruples, eſcape her, and endeavoured to leſſen his apprehenſions of the power of her charms, and the publick cenſure, by admitting to her ſociety an old friend, whoſe fervent piety would, ſhe hoped, perſuade the court, that their converſation turned wholly upon God in thoſe meetings before Lent, which were calculated only to offend him.

This artifice proved fruitleſs, although madame d'Hudicourt aſſiſted it with all the ready condeſcenſion of a hypocrite: madame de Monteſpan endeavoured to hinder divine grace from acting upon the ſoul of Lewis, and it acted upon her own; ſhe was afraid of being abandoned by her lover, and ſhe abandoned him.

Among the women of her chamber, there was one, whoſe ſecrecy and condeſcenſion, the lovers were ſo well convinced of, that in her preſence they reſigned themſelves up to all the freedom of a private interview. This woman, terrified at the judgments of God, ſo awfully denounced againſt ſinners, thought herſelf anſwerable for all the impurities ſhe had been a witneſs to: ſhe went to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, whoſe admonitions ſhe had always deſpiſed, and there exclaimed againſt the marchioneſs de Monteſpan and herſelf with all the bitterneſs of deſpair. She accuſed herſelf with having ruined the king, who was ruſhing upon his damnation, and of being the cauſe of all the miſeries, with which the wrath of heaven now threatened the kingdom. A thouſand times in the agonies of her guilty conſcience, ſhe cried out, that there was no longer any pardon, or ſalvation for her, that her only reſource againſt the horrors of her mind, was to hang or drown herſelf; and then ran into a ſhocking detail of all the looſe ſcenes ſhe had been a witneſs to.

Madame

Madame de Maintenon interrupted this impure confidence, and endeavoured to calm the agitation of the unhappy wretch. In vain ſhe aſſured her, that God was more merciful than ſhe had been guilty; the woman, ſo much the more tormented by remorſe, as ſhe had hitherto ſlighted the warnings of her conſcience, ſtill exclaimed, that ſhe ſaw hell opened beneath her feet. 'I only, ſaid ſhe, am the cauſe of all: but you, 'madam, you who are ſo virtuous, ſo holy, would 'do better to ſtrangle theſe baſtards, than to educate 'them.'

Madame de Maintenon prevailed upon this mad wretch, not to hang herſelf till ſhe had ſeen monſieur Lécuyer, a miſſionary, who drew ſinners to repentance, by repreſenting the ſupreme Being full of mercy and goodneſs, while others took delight in painting him always armed with thunder. This pious prieſt reſtored her to reaſon, and after leading her from deſpair to repentance, from repentance to hope, he ſent her back to the confeſſionary, bathed in tears, ſtriking her breaſt, and giving every indication of ſincere contrition. She went to the marchioneſs and demanded to be diſmiſſed from her ſervice, returned to her with, ſome remains of wildneſs, all the preſents ſhe had received from her and the king, rejected her promiſes with indignation, told her that ſhe was reſolved to live no longer in wickedneſs, conjured the marchioneſs to repent, and talked to her with that ſuperiority, which a ſoul, ſure of being in favour with its God, has over a woman who is only in favour with her king.

Madame de Monteſpan, now delivered up to her own ſad reflection, terrified at the dreadful ſentence, which decrees, that a few moments of guilty pleaſure ſhall be puniſhed with an eternity of torments, hurried on by example, which made ſo many proſelytes, weary of acting the part of a miſtreſs ſo humiliating during the eaſter holidays, found herſelf in that ſtate when the heart is ready to yield to the firſt ſentiment which attacks it with violence. She reſolved that this confeſ-

ſor,

ſor, whoſe pathetick powers produced ſuch dreadful conviction, ſhould draw her out of her uncertainty, either by augmenting her terror, or by giving her hope of an eaſy pardon. Accordingly ſhe ſent an order to monſieur Lécuyer, to attend the next day at her confeſſionary. The prieſt, greatly ſurprized at ſo peremptory a meſſage, was fully determined to teach this inſolent penitent, to reſpect the miniſters of the Lord.

Late in the evening on Aſh-Wedneſday, madame de Monteſpan, accompanied by madame de Maintenon, went in the coach of the latter, without any attendants, and with the greateſt privacy, to the church where monſieur Lécuyer waited for her: all theſe precautions were taken, to prevent the cenſures this act of religion might have occaſioned, ſince if publickly known, it would have been conſidered as an introduction to ſacrilege, or as an artifice of hypocriſy: ſuch is the miſerable ſtate of habitual vice, that, in her, even a good action became a crime.

Madame de Monteſpan came out of church diſſolved in tears; ſhe ſent immediately for monſieur Boſſuet, then preceptor to the Dauphin, and biſhop of Condom: ſhe related to him all that had paſſed, acknowledged that the miſſionary had filled her with horror at her ſituation, and had ſo terrified her by his denunciations of divine vengeance, that ſhe was firmly reſolved to leave the court, and employ the remaining part of her life in penitence for the ſins of the paſt, and intreated him to acquaint the king with her intention.

Monſieur Boſſuet approved of her deſign, exaggerated the fame it would procure her with the world, the merit it would have with God, and promiſed that he would prevail upon the king not to oppoſe it.

As he was returning from the apartment of madame de Monteſpan, he met madame de Maintenon, and related to her the miracles which had been wrought by monſieur Lécuyer. 'But do you, my lord, ſaid 'madame de Maintenon, do you, who are ſo well ac-

'quainted

'quainted with the human heart, believe that this 'vapour of devotion will laſt long? I cannot be ſure 'of that, replied the biſhop, but, however, there will 'be ſome weeks gained by it, and fewer ſins will be 'committed. Ah! my lord, replied madame de 'Maintenon, it is not the body that offends God, it 'is the will.'

As ſoon as the marchioneſs ſaw her enter her apartment, ſhe ran to her eagerly, and, embracing her, ſaid, 'At length you ſhall be ſatisfied with me: I am go-'ing from this place, to-morrow I will quit it, with-'out giving, without receiving, any farewell, and al-'moſt without any regret.'

An ordinary devotee would have ſeemed to approve of this ſcheme, and eluded the execution of it, would have been inceſſantly reproving the miſtreſs through oſtentation, and have favoured her amours through intereſt. But madame de Maintenon, whoſe fortune was ſtill connected with that of madame de Monteſpan, ſhewed, by the advice ſhe gave her, which was always equal and firm, that her averſion to the court was ſincere, her attachment to the king was diſintereſted, and her indifference to that favour, which ſhe acquired by virtues, for which others have loſt it, was as undiſſembled, as it was great.

She confirmed madame de Monteſpan in her former reſolution, and would not leave her the whole night, either becauſe ſhe hoped to diſengage her entirely from the king, by arguments founded on the principles of religion, or to fix her in her deſign, by urging every motive that honour, and the deſire of regaining the world's eſteem could ſuggeſt.

The marchioneſs wept; madame de Maintenon, by whom theſe tears were ſuſpected, looked earneſtly upon her, and made her bluſh. She aſſured her, ſhe would ſtill continue with her, and exhorted her to implore of God perſeverance and fortitude, to compleat this ſacrifice, which at one time ſeemed ſmall and eaſy, at another, difficult and great, according to the different emotions of the uncertain heart ſhe endeavoured to ſubdue.

Thoſe

Thoſe who were well acquainted with the character of madame de Maintenon, could neither ſuſpect her of diſſimulation, of regretting the loſs of that favour ſhe poſſeſſed at court, or of ſubmitting to circumſtances with only ſeeming fortitude. Her friends often complained that they could never perſuade this antique virtue, that ſuch a commerce as that of the king and madame de Monteſpan, was of no conſequence to the glory of the prince, was pardonable in the lady, and was uſeful to the people; and the marchioneſs herſelf had often upbraided her with making one in her little parties with the king, not ſo much to enliven the converſation by the charms of her wit, as to diſguſt them with guilt, by the allurements of virtuous pleaſures, or to keep them in reſtraint by the preſence of a rigid, tho' never melancholy virtue.

The abbé Gobelin, who poſſeſſed her entire confidence, knew how often ſhe had been afflicted for the moſt innocent compliances, and that ſhe paid twenty prieſts to remember every day in their prayers at the altar, the offending king, and no leſs guilty miſtreſs.

In thoſe times, the virtuous and the holy formed leagues of piety againſt the miſtreſſes of their king. They attributed to the efficacy of their prayers the converſion of the dutcheſs de la Valliere, and aſpired to the glory of triumphing alſo over madame de Monteſpan, who had a greater ſhare in it than they had, and whoſe perpetual infancy long ſported with all their ſchemes.

The virgins of the Lord dedicated to him their chaſtity, in hopes of obtaining the baniſhment of the adultereſs. The preſumptuous devotees, ſolicitous about every ſin but their own, puniſhed themſelves with ſhifts and girdles of hair for faults they had not committed, with all the ſeverity of that pride which ſeeks to expiate the crimes of another. Some made long pilgrimages, others beſtowed alms in great abundance; in all places there was faſting, praying, voluntary diſcipline, and ſevere penances, and this not to obtain of heaven that the king of France ſhould leave his

his neighbours in peace, ſhould ſubmit to the laws, ſhould reſtore, in compliance with the remonſtrances of his parliaments, their rights of ſuſpenſion, but that he ſhould ceaſe to love a woman.

Some ſuppoſing that the prayers of the new world were more acceptable to God than thoſe of the old, cauſed a propitiatory ſacrifice to be offered at Quebec, for the ſins committed at Paris. Other nations attack the miſtreſſes of their princes by curſes and rebellions, the French alone, by epigrams and prayers: and indeed our kings never hear of their ſubjects murmurs, without receiving at the ſame time, proofs of their affection.

Monſieur Boſſuet went directly to the king, and told him that madame de Monteſpan, who had ſo often complained of the ſeverity of confeſſors, would ſoon complain of their indulgence; that ſhe had now decided herſelf (what the caſuiſts had been baſe enough to leave in doubt) that her firſt duty was to quit the court, that ſhe conjured him not to oppoſe her deſign, but to forget her, and, above all, not to make any more attempts upon a heart which grace had touched, but not entirely ſubdued.

Boſſuet had acquired great influence over Lewis, as well by his ſucceſs in the education of his ſon, as by his zeal for the converſion of hereticks. He was one of thoſe men ſo rarely to be met with, whoſe fame was not leſſened by his appearance: he had always the air and manner of a meſſenger from the living God.

The king, ſurpriſed and afflicted at the ſudden retreat of madame de Monteſpan, let fall ſome tears. The biſhop affected to take this tender emotion for an effort of his great ſoul to redeem itſelf from ſlavery; he repreſented to him that his irregular conduct was fatal to the manners of his people, and would be the ruin of religion. 'Ah! Sire, he added, what an example do you give the prince, what effect can my leſſons have upon a ſon who ſees his father living in a publick adultery, the queen reduced to that cold reſpect which cannot with decency be with-held from her,

'her, while madame de Monteſpan is adored, virtue 'every where deſpiſed, the miniſters of your paſſions 'more powerful than your miniſters of ſtate. The 'ſalvation of your people is in your hands, you are 'the model of the court, the court is the model of 'the capital, and the capital of the provinces. Your 'majeſty, always ſure of being imitated, may root out 'ſin, by ſhewing that you hate it.'

The king was ſtruck with theſe truths, and ſighing told the prelate, that he had indeed many errors to reform, that he would leave madame de Monteſpan entirely miſtreſs of herſelf; and that he now only wanted a man who would put him alſo in the way to ſecure his ſalvation.

The biſhop repeated theſe words to madame de Monteſpan, who, after having feared a denial, was enraged at a conſent ſo eaſily obtained: ſhe would have aſked the prelate, if the king had granted her requeſt without any ſtruggle with himſelf, if he was not ſhocked at her deſign, if he had ſeemed to hope that ſhe would be induced to alter it; but ſhe did not dare to expreſs a criminal curioſity. Forced to conceal her ſentiments, ſhe condemned, yet indulged them, ſhe wept for the ſins ſhe had committed, and regretted thoſe ſhe had ſtill hoped to commit: ſhe promiſed her Creator that ſhe would be faithful to him, and repined that the king was inconſtant to her.

Madame de Maintenon, and monſieur Boſſuet looked at each other, aſtoniſhed that vice ſhould yet have ſo many allurements for a heart, which had felt the influence of virtue. They both joined to exhort the marchioneſs to perform the vows ſhe had made to God, and being convinced that upon certain occaſions, if good could be produced, it was of little importance by what methods, they ſometimes repreſented the angels as rejoicing at her converſion, ſometimes the world applauding her retreat.

'The vows of madame de la Valliere, ſaid they, 'have been attributed to jealouſy and deſpair; your 'flight will be thought the conſequence of return-

'ing

'ing virtue: the king had abandoned Valliere, but 'it is you who abandon the king. After the 'misfortune of having enſlaved him, all that now 'remains for you is the glory of renouncing him.' Theſe were powerful arguments with a woman, who, at three and thirty years of age, was ſtill young enough to be relieved from all her uneaſineſs, by a a little coach of filigreen work, drawn by ſix mice.

This involuntary fervor was diſſipated by ſleep, madame de Monteſpan went to bed converted, and waked a ſinner. Her penitent woman in vain ſolicited her to riſe, ſhe cried it was ſcarcely day, ſhe was exceſſively fatigued, it was an unheard-of cruelty not to leave her one moment in quiet; ſhe breathed deep ſighs, and immediately afterwards cried out, 'Ah, my God, how ſincerely will I love 'thee!'

Madame de Maintenon, who had foreſeen that her departure from the court would be as ſlow as her reſolution to leave it had been precipitate, had given all the neceſſary orders: the ſervants all held themſelves in readineſs, the coach was at the door, there was no pretence for delay. 'My God,' ſaid madame de Monteſpan, looking fixedly upon that bed which recalled to her remembrance ſins which ſhe would, and yet could not hate, 'muſt I then 'leave this place for ever.' 'Do you do well, ma-'dam,' ſaid madame de Maintenon, 'to honour it with 'your regret at parting?'

Reluctantly ſhe permitted her women to dreſs her, already ſhe chid with the peeviſh tone of a devotee, ſhe talked of embelliſhing Fontevrault, but thought it cruel that ſhe was not to ſee the caſtle of Verſailles finiſhed: ſhe interrupted acts of contrition, by ſecret complaints againſt that grace which had touched her heart ſo unſeaſonably. She was never more lovely than now, had never been ſo paſſionately beloved, and perhaps never loved with ſo much ardour; yet could ſhe flatter herſelf that the king would contin-

nue

nue firm in his reſolutions to correct his errors: but what probability was there that a man, at his age, ſhould love nothing but God? would he not fly to new amours, would he not ſeek women who would grant him the firſt favours without ſcruple, and the following without remorſe? would he not laviſh upon them thoſe honours, thoſe diſtinctions, the loſs of which is regretted more than that of the lover who diſpenſes them. 'Of what importance is it to you,' ſaid madame de Maintenon, 'that the place of miſtreſs is filled up, provided it is not by you? Ah! ſaid madame de Monteſpan, it is plain you never loved a king, no nor even any other man.'

Madame de Monteſpan at length tore herſelf away; madame de Maintenon, at her intreaty, remained at court, to give the neceſſary direction for the removal of the princes, whom the mother was now reſolved to educate herſelf.

Mean time the courtiers, as uſual, ſent to enquire the health of the favourite; ſhe is already at Paris, and her apartment at Verſailles is beſieged with a croud of importunate paraſites, who deſire to know how ſhe had paſſed the night; by patrons who had already received half the ſum promiſed, for the ſucceſs of a petition; by inquiſitive friends who, upon the firſt notice of an event, run eagerly to diſcover the myſtery. They are told, with a melancholy accent, that madame de Monteſpan had ſet out precipitately for Paris.

In an inſtant, this ſervile croud who had before worn but one face, and that of reſpect and ſubmiſſion, now had their different thoughts impreſſed upon their countenances; ſome openly ſhewed their ſatisfaction, others diſſembled theirs, theſe affected ſadneſs in hopes of a reconciliation, thoſe concealed their affliction through ſhame and compaſſionating an exile. Some looked at each other, as if to aſk whether they ought to be ſad or rejoice; the greater part endeavoured to appear indifferent, yet were afraid that their looks would betray them. All went away in doubt whether they

they had had prudence enough, or trembling leſt they had ſhewed too much.

As ſoon as it was publickly known that madame de Monteſpan had quitted the court, every one judged of it differently: the favourites attributed her retreat to a love quarrel, the devotees to the Sermons of Lent; ſome to the king's compliance with popular prejudices; but the courtiers in general to her being abſolutely in diſgrace. They haſtened to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, but from her they could draw nothing but what increaſed their uncertainty, and made them deſirous of knowing more. The dutcheſs de Richelieu, to whom the ſins of her friend had been ſo advantageous, was grieved that ſhe had renounced them. 'She might have ſtaid here, ſaid ſhe to madame de 'Maintenon, we would have converted her without 'your Paris expedition, and your terrible monſieur 'Lécuyer.'

This dutcheſs, governed at once by her ambition and the abbé Gobelin, reconciled the dictates of paſſion with the advice of her director, by conjuring the favourite to be no longer guilty, and by contriving meetings between her and Lewis, in which it was impoſſible to avoid being ſo. She would however have been well pleaſed that the king ſhould have a miſtreſs, of whom he could not always be the maſter.

Madame de Maintenon reproved her for thoſe ſhameful ſentiments. 'We are not now, ſaid ſhe, to 'think of reigning through madame de Monteſpan, 'we are to hinder any other perſon from reigning af-'ter her. Leave me to convert her: if you make me 'angry, I will convert you yourſelf.'

Madame de Richelieu gave way, aſtoniſhed at the aſcendant ſhe had over her, her who had been accuſtomed to exert ſuch tyranny over the minds of others, that ſhe had married the duke de Richelieu in ſpite of Mazarin, Anne of Auſtria, and the dutcheſs d'Aiguillon; obtained the poſt of lady of honour to the queen, contrary to the intentions of the queen herſelf; and

acquired the eſteem of the king, notwithſtanding her paſt faults, and her preſent abject compliances.

CHAPTER LIV.

The commencement of the king's affection for madame de Maintenon.

THE two ladies were ſtill engaged in a converſation concerning madame de Monteſpan, when the king ſent for madame de Maintenon. He did not doubt but the marchioneſs had confided to madame de Maintenon her laſt ſentiments at parting. He ſhewed an eager curioſity to hear them: madame de Maintenon ſpoke to him of his miſtreſs, of God, of what he owed to his people, with all that ſuperiority which virtue acquires, by a plainneſs juſtified by diſintereſtedneſs. When ſhe declared againſt the king's amour with the marchioneſs, ſhe deſtroyed her own intereſt. Madame de Monteſpan was bound to the court by chains, madame de Maintenon was held to thoſe chains by a ſingle thread.

But whether it was that this ſubordinate favour was odious to her, on account of the ſuſpicions it ſubjected her to; whether the ſtate of her fortune, by promiſing her an agreeable life at Paris, made it eaſy for her to renounce the court, or whether influenced by other motives no leſs generous, but more pure, it is certain that ſhe indulged the enthuſiaſm of her piety, and would not quit the king, till he had promiſed her no more to recall the marchioneſs de Monteſpan.

Lewis, ſtill ſtruggling in the ſnares of love, though he made this promiſe, yet ſeemed to make it with regret. 'She loves me, ſaid he, ſighing, and 'I ſtill love her. Ah Sire! replied madame de 'Maintenon, if you love her, would you compleat 'her ruin, and her infamy? honour is of more 'price than all your treaſures, and the whole world is 'not worth a ſingle ſoul: if ſhe had ever truly loved

'you

'you, would ſhe have dragged you into perdition?
'when love is not virtuous, it is the moſt ſhameful of
'vices.'

The king was leaning againſt the chimney, and liſtened to her with that attention which invites the plainneſs of truth. She took advantage of thoſe favourable moments. 'It is, ſaid ſhe, doubtleſs, per-
'mitted to me to maintain the intereſts of my friend,
'but it would be preſumption to give advice to my
'king: yet if ....' here ſhe ſtop'd, and ſought to read in his eyes a pardon for this freedom, and permiſſion to hazard a new.

The king aſſured her that ſhe might ſay whatever ſhe pleaſed, adding that he was too well convinced of her regard for his honour and intereſt, to be offended at any thing that came from her.

'I would ſay then, Sire, reſumed madame de Main-
'tenon, that if the benefits your majeſty has confer-
'red upon me, authoriſe me to expreſs my gratitude,
'by giving you advice of the utmoſt importance, I
'would ſay that guilty love is fatal to the glory of a
'prince; that for a man to ſeduce the wife of his
'neighbour, is an injuſtice puniſhable by the laws of
'every nation; but for a prince to take away by vi-
'olence the wife of his ſubject, is a crime for which
'there is no name. Ah! madame, replied the king,
'even this I have committed, ceaſe to reproach me:
'I have loved too much like a ſovereign, I have car-
'ried my authority too far: it was mean to take ad-
'vantage of my power, it was unjuſt to abuſe it. I
'ſee, I feel, I bluſh for it. But all this I have done
'in ſpite of myſelf. I have loved with too much
'ardour, I was no longer maſter of myſelf, and ſhew-
'ed too well that I was ſo of others. This reduced
'me to the neceſſity of committing fault upon fault.'

'Truly, Sire, replied madame de Maintenon, you
'accuſe yourſelf with ſo much candour, that it is ſuf-
'ficient to deliver you to your own reflexions: only
'leave, I conjure, leave to madame de Monteſpan the
'only two reſources which now remain for her; tears

'of contrition, which can alone reconcile her with 'God, and a voluntary retreat into a cloiſter, which 'can alone reſtore her to the eſteem of the world. In-'ſtead of diſputing with heaven a heart which it 'would raviſh from you, ceaſe, Sire, to give an ex-'ample of libertiniſm, of which your court, and your 'whole kingdom catches the contagion, which fills 'our ſex with corruption, and yours with baſeneſs. 'A time will come, when long remorſe ſhall ſucceed 'to theſe ſhort pleaſures. Turn, Sire, turn your eyes 'upon the Carmelites, and there ſee to what puniſh-'ments guilty paſſion condemns itſelf.'

There was no reſiſting the looks, the action, the voice of madame de Maintenon: madame de Monteſpan when ſometimes ſurprized by her in a fault, would intreat her to be ſilent to ſhield herſelf from the magick of her eloquence: a moment afterwards ſhe would conjure her to ſpeak, to eſcape the tyranny of a ſilence ſtill more powerfully perſuaſive. Madame de Maintenon has been repreſented as a devotee outrageous in her zeal, a female pedant with a veil upon her head, a ſcourge in her hand, a maſque upon her face, her eyes ſometimes bent upon the ground, ſometimes raiſed towards heaven. Lewis, the moſt delicate of men, the moſt praiſed and flattered of kings, would not have reliſhed truth out of the mouth of a magpie.

Madame de Maintenon was ſkillful in chuſing thoſe moments when ſure of pleaſing, ſhe was liſtened to with favourable prejudices; ſhe conveyed her reproofs in language ſo ſoft, ſo inſinuating, that they entered deep into the heart. The ſound of her voice ſo harmonious, her accent ſo juſt, ſo affecting, the candor and ſweetneſs ſo viſible in her open countenance, the natural action of the fineſt hand in the world, eyes that ſparkled intelligence, the graceful movements of a form, ſo elegant, yet ſo majeſtick, that it effaced all that was beautiful in the court, all contributed to give her thoſe moving graces of oratory which convince the underſtanding, and captivate the will.

Her perfect knowledge of the human heart, the conſequence of having deeply ſtudied her own, repreſt the

the ſallies of her exceſſive frankneſs, and warned her of the inſtant when it was moſt proper to begin, and when it was neceſſary to leave off. Mademoiſelle d'Armagnac, the marchioneſs d'Havrincour, madame de Lande, mademoiſelle d'Aumale, all theſe ladies who knew her but in a very advanced age, yet at preſent declare that when they ſaw her they thought they beheld the Graces; when they heard her, Wiſdom herſelf ſeemed to ſpeak.

Lewis tranſported to find that virtue ſhould employ the ſame charms to bring him back to God, that vice had made uſe of to draw him to herſelf, prolonged a converſation in which he enjoyed the preſence of a woman who ſo agreeably diſguſted him with the reſt of her ſex. He found no difficulty in ſwearing to her who began to pleaſe, that he would renounce her who had pleaſed ſo long ago. All his deſires now centered in her, who ſo earneſtly endeavoured to extinguiſh them. He had triumphed over an innocent, and he had thought himſelf happy; he had ſubdued a coquet, and his vanity was ſoothed by it; all that now remained for him was to conquer a female philoſopher who did not deign even to defy him, and this was to him the heighth of good fortune. When love is yet only a ſlight inclination, we reproach ourſelves with it as a crime; when it is a rebellion of the paſſions, enraged againſt the hand that enſlaves them, we applaud it as a noble ſentiment. Chriſtina diſdained to reign over a king, quitted the beautiful Sparre * and the throne, thought Conde, was too great a general to know how to love, and went to Brabant to ſeek the conqueror of Rocroi.

In Madame de Monteſpan Lewis now ſaw a woman inſenſible as her baby, and like that the ſport of every hand; but in Madam de Maintenon an amazon whoſe pride it was neceſſary to abate: a ſentiment to which he had hitherto been a ſtranger, told him, that for hearts worn out with pleaſures, there was one worth

* Her maid of honour.

all the others, that of ſubjecting, and profaning virtue.

'Muſt I then, ſaid the king ſighing, muſt I reſolve 'to ſee no more the two perſons in the world who are 'moſt dear to me?' He added that he flattered himſelf ſhe would at leaſt continue with his children, and that the abbé Gobelin would convince her, that the mother would commit more faults in educating them, than ſhe had done by giving them birth.

Madame de Maintenon paſſing over the firſt part of this ſpeech, which ſhe might naturally attribute to a habit the king had of ſaying only gallant things to women, replied to the latter, that her reſolution to leave the court was founded upon two reaſons, and theſe were her averſion to a place of libertiniſm, where the maſter alone was in the way to be virtuous, and her uneaſineſs cauſed by that ſtrange medley of reſpect and contempt, friendſhip and hate, confidence and diſtruſt, that madame de Monteſpan treated her with. That by retiring to Paris ſhe ſhould be eaſy upon the firſt article; but that madame de Monteſpan could only decide with regard to the ſecond. That ſhe would ſuſpend her reſolution, till ſhe ſaw whether devotion would correct the faults in madame de Monteſpan's temper, and teach her that it was alike ſhameful and unjuſt to make criminal conceſſions to her ſuperiors, and to treat with haughtineſs, with caprice and unkindneſs, her friends and her inferiors.

The king finding that he ſhould be obliged to diſſemble his deſigns, promiſed her all ſhe required: but he doubtleſs promiſed himſelf that he would take ſuch meaſures as that neither the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, nor madame de Maintenon ſhould eſcape him. He had the former to puniſh for having abandoned him, the latter to humble for having forced him to conſent to it. Madame de Monteſpan was a rebel whom it was neceſſary he ſhould reduce; madame de Maintenon gloried in her freedom, and her he reſolved to ſubdue: one ſometimes excited his pity; the other always raiſed his admiration; both of them, thoſe deſires which he had vowed to repreſs.

Thus

Thus it was that virtue completed that fortune, which indigence had begun. Thus was madame de Maintenon connected with the court which ſhe deteſted, by thoſe very ſteps ſhe had taken to remove herſelf from it. This averſion for a court will with difficulty be believed ſincere, by thoſe who do not live in it, but before they pronounce abſolutely let them interrogate thoſe that do.

The king every day more charmed with madame de Maintenon, neglected nothing which he thought could make her reſidence in the court agreeable to her. He ſhewed the moſt reſpectful attention, the ſofteſt homage to this awful character, new enough to pleaſe greatly, amiable enough to pleaſe for a long time: when his eſteem and veneration for her had taken away all hope of ſeducing her, the idea of tempting her, of ſeeing her every day, was preferred by him to all other pleaſures. His paſſion, nouriſhed in ſilence never appeared but in that reſpect ſo ſeldom ſeen in a lover, ſo wonderful in a king, till the moment when, by the death of his queen, he was at liberty to offer at one time his heart and his hand, to her whom he had at firſt wiſhed and afterwards deſpaired of obtaining at any other price; convinced by her perſeverance in virtue, that ſhe was not to be ſubdued, by her humility in grandeur, that ſhe was ſuperior to ambition.

When madame de Maintenon recalled to her remembrance this ſeries of events, that raiſed her to the rank from which they were moſt likely to exclude her, when ſhe ſaw wiſdom advance her by thoſe very meaſures which prudence would have diſdained, when ſhe found herſelf fixed to the throne, by thoſe efforts ſhe made to diſengage herſelf from the court, ſhe doubtleſs exclaimed, Oh! happy virtue: but when ſhe reflected that the firſt link to this chain of ſurprizing incidents, was the guilty fruitfulneſs of madame de Monteſpan, which ſhe had ſo openly condemned, and which had nevertheleſs been ſo advantageous to her, did ſhe not ſay in ſecret, Ah! fortunate vice!

CHAPTER LV.

Cabals of the devotees, the murmurs of the courtiers.

THE king by his behaviour removed all doubts concerning the cauſe of madame de Monteſpan's retreat. He went to the pariſh church, he commended the zeal of the miſſionaries, he mentioned monſieur Lécuyer with approbation, and as he came out of church, ſaid to the miſſionaries, 'I have great faults 'to expiate, but you have favour with God: pray 'for me.'

At theſe words the devotees triumphed, the libertines turned pale, ſenſible and unprejudiced perſons foreſaw that this regularity would not laſt long. So much beauty ſtill on one ſide, ſo many deſires on the other, and thoſe ſuppreſt only for the love of God, was a ſacrifice too difficult to be perfect.

However the biſhop of Condom received the compliments and congratulations of the whole court, and but weakly oppoſed the flattering appellation of a ſecond ſaint Ambroſe. Being conſulted by the king, who was deſirous of receiving the communion, he would permit him the ſacrament of penitence only. The preachers claimed a ſhare of his glory, and thundered with apoſtolick zeal againſt fornication and adultery. The king having been preſent at a ſermon in which the preacher inveighed with great vehemence againſt the love of fame and of women, ſaid to the prince of Marſillac as he was going out of church, 'What do you 'think of what you have juſt heard?' I think, Sire, 'that..... heſitated Marſillac, and ſtopt. 'I for 'my part am very well pleaſed with it,' reſumed Lewis. 'And I alſo, added the courtier.'

The Jeſuits, whoſe zeal is ſo cautious, ſo prudent, ſpoke with as much freedom, as if they had thought reſerve no longer neceſſary: one of them in his ſermon explaining the parable of Nathan, ventured to apply it to the king, and tranſported with enthuſiaſtick fervour, apoſtraphized him ſeveral times in theſe words: *Tu es ille vir.* The king deſired to know the meaning of them, but

but no one durſt tell him, one ſaid that he did not hear the words, another that he had forgot the latin language. Sire, ſaid the duke de Montauzier, the preacher ſaid, *Thou art the man.*

The king could not help diſcovering ſome ſigns of indignation; the courtiers, who probably were not ſorry that their maſter had been told a harſh truth, but would have been grieved not to be thought capable of offending againſt all truth to pleaſe him, endeavoured to heighten his reſentment againſt this imprudent apoſtle. But Lewis, whoſe ears were ſtill ſtruck with the reproofs of madame de Maintenon, and who would have ſacrificed a province to the pleaſure of ſhewing an inſtance of greatneſs of ſoul, replied, 'He 'has done his duty, let us do ours.'

Mean time madame de Monteſpan arrived at Paris: aſtoniſhed to ſee herſelf there, frightened at the ſolitude around her, ſhe ſometimes aſked if it was true that ſhe had left the king; ſometimes by what enchantment ſhe had been able to reſolve upon it. Impatient to hear news of him, to know what he had ſaid of her departure, if he regretted her loſs, if he loved her ſtill, ſhe was upon the point of returning herſelf to ſatisfy all her doubts. Madame de Maintenon did not yet appear; ſhe dreaded leſt the king ſhould retain her, the ſtings of jealouſy were already fixed in her heart.

Tired out with vain expectation, ſhe eagerly flew to a houſe which madame de Maintenon had in Paris; ſhe found there no one but the woman who had the care of it, 'when madame de Maintenon comes, ſaid 'ſhe, ſend her inſtantly to me, you know me, do you 'not? Yes, replied the woman, every one knows that 'you are the lady who purchaſed the place of madame 'de la Valliere.* You inſult me, child, anſwered 'madame de Monteſpan, with that ſoftneſs which 'makes every thing be forgot, but you ſay the truth, 'and I have deſerved worſe.'

* The marchioneſs d .... told me ſhe had this ſtory from madame de Maintenon herſelf.

At Verſailles madame de Maintenon and mounſieur Boſſuet, laboured to ſeparate the two lovers for ever. The biſhop was of opinion that he ought to prohibit the king from receiving the ſacrament in order to ſpare him the commiſſion of a ſacrilege. And madame de Maintenon thought it neceſſary that the marchioneſs de Monteſpan ſhould be ordered to receive it, to guard her againſt relapſing into ſin, by the obligation ſo ſacred an engagement laid her under, to perform her duty. But it was not eaſy for a woman, ſcarce eſcaped from the arms of her lover to *ſee and taſte how good the Lord is.*

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan had at length the ſatisfaction to ſee madame de Maintenon again, who ſaid a great many kind things to her from the queen, but ſpoke not a word of the king. Eſteem could not conſole her for the loſs of love. Madame de Monteſpan would have readily anſwered, Let her continue to hate me, provided he loves me ſtill. Madame de Maintenon uſed her utmoſt endeavours to ſmooth the way to heaven to this new convert; ſhe did not fatigue her with exacting auſterities and prayers, ſhe required of her only good works, with a hope that the pleaſure of doing good would ſhew her how little all other pleaſures were, compared with that only true one.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan always unequal, always various, would be one day cold in her devotion, another day full of fervour and zeal; and alarmed, and re-aſſured madame de Maintenon by turns. Incapable of recollection, and finding always a void within herſelf, ſhe had not leiſure to perceive, ſhe was out of the delightful hurry of court, by the croud of devotees, who reſorted to her houſe, each emulous to confirm her in her new ſentiments. Accuſtomed to adulation, her vanity was ſtill ſoothed by the extravagant praiſes the prieſts beſtowed upon her repentance. She ſoon perſuaded herſelf that the ſoul of a marchioneſs was of far greater value than that of a common perſon, and that by ſhewing rigour to the king, ſhe rendered a ſervice to God.

The

The abbé Gobelin kept her continually employed in exerciſes of piety, and acts of benevolence, ſo that languor was not permitted to approach her. The minute practices of devotion filled up thoſe moments which uſed to be given to the little cabals of the court, and pride, which ſuggeſted to her the notion of being under the immediate care and direction of the divine Being, recompenſed her for the ſacrifices her vanity had made.

Madame de Maintenon endeavoured to prolong the illuſion, till the king had entirely thrown off his chains, or till the habit of being virtuous had made the marchioneſs love virtue. At her perſuaſion, monſieur Boſſuet prevailed upon the queen to ſee the new penitent. They met at the convent of the Carmelites, in the ſtreet du Bouloy: the interview laſted two hours. Madame de Monteſpan threw herſelf at the feet of the queen, implored her pardon, and promiſed to repair by a life of exemplary piety, the ſcandalous ſins ſhe had committed. The queen miſtook her remorſe for virtue, ſhe believed her tears ſincere, ſhe dried them up, and inſtead of permitting her to quit the poſt ſhe had in her houſhold, ſhe ſaid to her, with an exceſs of goodneſs, 'It is with me that you have ſinned, 'with me you ſhall live penitent.'

The remainder of their converſation was very free and unreſerved on both ſides: madame de Monteſpan inſtructed the queen how to pleaſe the king, the queen taught madame de Monteſpan how to pleaſe God.

Two viſits made by the marchioneſs to the abbey of Fontevrault diſconcerted all the politicians. Some ſaid that ſhe went there to ſettle the time of her retreat. It is very probable, truly, replied others, that the abbeſs her ſiſter will adviſe her to take the veil: no, it is all artifice, or at moſt the effect of a love quarrel. The Janſeniſts maintained * that the king was viſibly purſued by that grace, the diſciples of which he had ſo conſtantly perſecuted: that his crimes were the conſequence of the faulty compliances of his confeſſors; that indeed

* M. of Hebert.

indeed every thing might be expected from the rectitude of his own heart, and his readineſs to reform, but that it was not aſtoniſhing, that a Jeſuit ſhould not be able to take advantage of the powerful influence of grace.

The huguenots, who had learned to know a devout king from the conduct of Lewis the thirteenth, and who were made acquainted with the character of Boſſuet by his *expoſition of the catholick faith*, were alarmed at the power this prelate acquired over the conſcience of the prince. They were deſirous that Lewis ſhould be virtuous, but they were apprehenſive of the artificial and deſtroying zeal of his moraliſts: they publickly reported that the king would come out of his hands as indifferent a chriſtian, as Turenne was a bad catholick: that he compounded with the paſſions of the one, as he had done with the errors of the other: and that irregularities of conduct were rather concealed than reformed, when the father of a family choſe for his counſellor the preceptor to his ſon.

To the ſlow ſeverity of the biſhop, they oppoſed the vigour and firmneſs of thoſe ſynods which ſolemnly interdicted Henry IV. from the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. Boſſuet took no other revenge for thoſe ſlanders than by converting thoſe who propagated them, by perſuading the pope to give his approbation to that *expoſition*, in which Maimburg found every thing but truth, by condemning the frailty of the king without reſerve, as without bitterneſs; by being as complaiſant as a courtier in diſputes upon tenets with the calviniſts; and as firm as a father of the church in moral deciſions with the king.

But now the feaſt of Pentecoſt approached. The biſhop permitted the king to perform his devotions, and madame de Maintenon prepared the marchioneſs for the ſame ſolemn act. Lewis twice ſaid to the queen, and the curate of Verſailles, 'Be perſuaded 'that I will not in the ſmalleſt degree alter my reſolu-'tions, rely upon my word, and let the inquiſitive 'know my ſentiments.'

Thoſe

Thoſe who knew how capable he was of ſubduing his paſſions, believed that he had pronounced an irrevocable decree againſt miſtreſſes. Madame de Maintenon knew him better: ſhe foreſaw that if the marchioneſs de Monteſpan was quitted, ſhe would be ſoon ſucceeded by another.

The queen, governed entirely by a confeſſor full of Spaniſh prejudices, inſtead of ſhewing any ſolicitude to regain the king's love, employed herſelf in praying for his ſalvation, diſguſted him with an ill-timed piety, diſdained to improve by dreſs thoſe charms that were yet unimpaired, abſented herſelf from all diverſions, or at leaſt appeared at them with languor and diſcontent.

The princeſs de Montpenſier, who had all the curioſity of a woman, ſurrounded with cabals and intrigues, and was excluded from a ſhare in any, went to viſit madame de Monteſpan, and told her that loving her ſo much as ſhe did, ſhe could not help wiſhing for her return to court. The marchioneſs anſwered only with a loud laugh, with which the princeſs did not ſeem offended, ſo well had the impriſonment of the count de Lauzun inured her to affronts. Madame de Monteſpan at length condeſcending to anſwer her, ſaid, 'If I return to court, it is neceſſary that I ſhould 'change my name, for how can I appear again in pub-'lick with this name of Monteſpan, which always awa-'kens the remembrance of my huſband's extravagancies, 'and the follies of his wife.' The princeſs de Montpenſier did not, till ſome years afterwards, comprehend the ſecret meaning of theſe words, as will be ſeen in the ſubſequent part of theſe memoirs.

At Paris and at Verſailles, the king's indifference was the cauſe of great uneaſineſs, while in the provinces they bleſt heaven for it. It is neceſſary, ſaid the courtiers, that our king ſhould have a miſtreſs or a prime miniſter: both may indeed commit great faults: but by reſtraining perſons in place within the bounds of their duty, they alſo do great good: a woman ſoftens the manners of the prince, ſhe makes him acceſſible to intreaty, ſhe calms his reſentment, ſhe warns him of his faults, ſhe inſpires him with the love of glory, and

and of the arts, ſhe gives him that gentleneſs, that moderation which render authority ſo ſweet, and obedience ſo eaſy. The abuſe of ſubordinate power is ſuppreſt; the miniſters are divided, but they ſerve with more diligence. Who would wiſh to be a king, who would not think it the greateſt misfortune to be one, if the maſter dare not indulge himſelf in what the meaneſt of his ſubjects thinks is permitted to him? A miſtreſs is expenſive; but why ſhould that be an objection, if luxury reſtores to the people what oppreſſive edicts have forced from them? What are thoſe places, diſtributed by madame de Monteſpan, thoſe penſions allowed to different artiſts, thoſe petitions ſo frequently preſented by her, but merit which ſhe rewards, and misfortunes which ſhe relieves?

But manners are corrupted! were our manners then more pure under the reign of the pious Lewis the thirteenth, who loved no woman? and his haughty cardinal, who dared to love all, was he leſs reſpected by the Pope and the Sorbonne? But the king's ſalvation is in danger! alas, will he not ſoon enough be old? his devotion will be then more diſadvantageous to us, than his amours are now. But the abject ſubmiſſion of our nobility! Ridiculous prejudice; the homage we pay madame de Monteſpan is part of that adoration we owe to our king: we muſt now, inſtead of one woman pay homage to twenty: and to what women! to madame Colbert, as inacceſſible as her huſband, to madame Dufrênoi, as haughty as her lover, and to ſome dependants of Seignelay, who ought to be ſhut up in the ſuburbs.

Such was the reaſoning of thoſe men, who were inceſſantly talking of decency, and deſpiſed, virtue, who knew the whole extent of authority, and were ignorant of the power of the laws, and the influence of example. Madame de Maintenon reaſoned better; 'if 'France, ſaid ſhe, had a king diveſted of all paſſions, 'what would become of other nations?' She knew that the counſels of love, and the fears of madame de Monteſpan, had ſaved Holland from an invaſion.

CHAP.

CHAPTER LVI.

A Marriage propoſed to Madame de Maintenon.

THE time drew near when madame de Maintenon was to go to Barege with the duke du Maine, but the marchioneſs de Monteſpan could not reſolve to part with her, and retained her by threatning to abjure devotion, if ſhe was abandoned by her, who had at firſt adviſed and afterwards confirmed her in it.

However ſolitude and reſtraint began to recall her deſires to what ſhe had loſt, and ambition to ſhew her the means of recovering it. She ſecretly made propoſitions to Louvois, and promiſes to Marſillac. Madame de Maintenon happened to diſcover theſe intrigues, and broke them off, and was from thenceforward looked upon by madame de Maintenon as an importunate ſpy, and preſſed to go ſoon to Barege.

The dutcheſs de Richelieu, who always feared madame de Maintenon would eſcape from her, either by force or inclination, reſolved to fix her at court by a marriage, which would make her a dutcheſs. She had laid this ſcheme a long time before, but finding that it was probable madame de Monteſpan would never be recalled, or that madame de Maintenon would retire from court after her journey to Barege, ſhe reſumed her deſigns with more ardor than ever.

The duke de V . . . B . . . . was the perſon ſhe fixed upon for a huſband to madame de Maintenon. His youth waſted in debauchery, his old age conſuming in diſeaſe, the remembrance of two wives ſufficiently bad, could not prevent this old nobleman from a reſolution to take a third. The dutcheſs de Richelieu had inſpired him with ſo violent a paſſion for her friend, that he did not think he ſhould debaſe himſelf by marrying the widow of one of his dependants, and who had ſince been herſelf his dependant. Madame de Monteſpan entered ſo coldly into this ſcheme that it had

hitherto

hitherto produced nothing; but being inceſſantly oppoſed and reſtrained by madame de Maintenon, ſhe at length conſented through policy, to do what ſhe was not incited to by friendſhip. She joined her endeavours to thoſe of madame de Richelieu to remove the firſt obſtacles, and to ſmooth the way to ſucceſs.

Madame de Maintenon was pleaſed to find that her burleſque huſband had not placed her below the moſt illuſtrious alliances; but ſhe thought it hard that ſhe ſhould all her life have only opportunities of changing her fetters, and of becoming a ſlave to an old man, after having been ſo to a cripple and a child. She ſuffered this treaty to go on as they pleaſed, by whom it was managed, and ſeemed wholly indifferent about its ſucceſs. But when ſhe was applied to, to declare her reſolution, neither a great title, a high rank at court, nor all thoſe ſplendid trifles which make ſo many marriages, could force her conſent: vanity was ſilent, and reaſon only ſpoke.

Fear had prevailed upon madame de Monteſpan to favour this marriage, a fear more powerful induced her to break it off. Among the different inquietudes with which her mind was agitated, the deſire of knowing her deſtiny was one of the greateſt. Credulous to exceſs, ſhe had tried all the ridiculous forms by which future events are foretold. Either diſcontented with the anſwers, becauſe they were unfavourable, or doubtful of their certainty, becauſe they were very different, ſhe reſolved to conſult one of thoſe women who read the deſtinies of mortals in the lines of the face and hand. She went to the houſe of the moſt celebrated fortune-teller in Paris, attended by madame d'Hudicourt and madame de Maintenon, dreſt like her women. The ſorcereſs, after the uſual grimaces, ſtarted back with terror and ſurpriſe; 'What do I ſee?' ſaid ſhe, pointing to madame de Maintenon: 'yet a little 'time longer and your woman ſhall be a greater 'lady than you are; and as for you, my dear, ſaid 'ſhe to madame d'Hudicourt, you will be very fortu-'nate, but you will be baniſhed from the court for 'your propenſity to ſcandal.'

The

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was greatly affected with this prediction, ſhe never looked upon madame de Maintenon afterwards without obſerving that ſhe had indeed ſomething in her eyes, which indicated that ſhe would be one day ſuperior to her. She dreaded leſt her marriage with the duke de V.... ſhould be the firſt ſtep towards this predicted ſuperiority, ſhe therefore croſſed it with eager ſolicitude; but afterwards, by the force of continual perſecutions ſhe brought on another, which effectually humbled her and elevated her rival: ſo that the marchioneſs contributed to the accompliſhment of the oracle, by doing every thing ſhe could to elude it, and madame de Maintenon by avoiding one ſlavery, threw herſelf into a greater.

The dutcheſs de Richelieu often preſt her in favour of the duke de V.... but ſhe could not prevail; madame de Maintenon always anſwered that the duke wanted two eſſential qualities, virtue and an eſtate. However ſhe might poſſibly have been induced at laſt to conſent, if the king having been informed of the affairs, had not ſaid, 'If ſhe has an inclination to marry, 'I will give her a nobleman of the firſt rank for a 'huſband.'

CHAPTER LVII.

Madame de Monteſpan *returns to court.*

THE king was now wholly employed in conſidering how to recall his miſtreſs, without having his meaſures diſconcerted by thoſe who had undertaken to break his chains. Monſieur Boſſuet, whoſe zeal was too fervent to be always regulated by prudence, tired him with exhortations, and talked to a prince full of paſſion, with all the auſterity of a man who has none. He doubtleſs imagined that it was as eaſy to reſign the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, as mademoiſelle des Vieux. He exacted from the king a formal diſmiſſion of his miſtreſs. The king conſented to it and deſired that he would

would be the bearer, but inſtead of that cruel farewell which he had promiſed, he wrote her a very paſſionate letter. The biſhop, extremely pleaſed that he had, as he imagined, gained his point, delivered this letter to madame de Monteſpan, and brought back an anſwer ſtill more tender. This correſpondence was carried on for ſome days, the lovers made vows to love chaſtly for the future, and appointed meetings to break thoſe vows: Racine put the king's letters into verſe; and the biſhop of Condom was the meſſenger of the lovers, and covered with a grey cloak went every evening from Clagni to Verſailles.

The king went a few days afterwards to ſee the buildings that were carrying on there. He found his miſtreſs in the midſt of twelve hundred workmen, wholly employed in finiſhing her houſe, endeavouring to forget the crimes by which ſhe had purchaſed it, adorning the moſt voluptuous cloſets, and exhauſting all the induſtry of art, to gratify the caprices of a new kind of luxury.

This firſt interview was very reſerved, but it foretold a greater intimacy; and the homage paid by the courtiers to madame de Monteſpan diſcovered to the biſhop that he had been duped, and that he had done what Vardes, or Lauzun would have been aſhamed of doing. Madame de Monteſpan conſoled him for the ridicule he had drawn upon himſelf, by aſſuring him that ſhe would be always rigid to her lover, and the king rewarded him for his good offices, by naming him for the poſt of firſt almoner to the dauphineſs.

Madame de Maintenon could not approve of madame de Monteſpan's return to court, the lovers indeed only ſaw each other in publick, or if they had any private interviews, they had no impure conſequences; but if it is the action that makes the ſcandal, it is the will that conſtitutes the crime. Madame de Monteſpan's reſerve was the conſequence of her ambition, and thus by affecting a return to virtue, ſhe offended it more, and gave occaſion to the wiſe and good to fear, that what was only an artifice of refined coquetry, ſhould be miſtaken for an effect of religion: they

they dreaded the aſcendant of a woman who both knew how to intoxicate the prince with love, and to keep him within the bounds of reſpect.

Already the honours that were paid her were carried to the higheſt degree, the queen gave the example, the dutcheſs de Richelieu ſupported her in the moſt ridiculous claims, madame de Monteſpan took way of all dutcheſſes, and the honours which ſhe had rejected as flattery, while guilty, ſhe exacted as her right when ſhe was no longer ſo. Every one yielded to a ſubject, who never appeared in publick but with the pomp of royalty, had always four of the body guard on each ſide of her coach: this pageantry aſtoniſhed the nation, which had forgot that the Parliament ſent deputies to Henry the IVth, with compliments of condolence upon the death of the fair Gabriella.

In the midſt of this exterior triumph, a fund of ſadneſs was perceived: the king had contributed to it ſufficiently to fill madame de Maintenon with grief, but not to ſatisfy madame de Monteſpan. New pleaſures, new ſhews were prepared at Fontainbleau: Turenne was killed, and the people exclaimed that madame de Monteſpan had been his murderer, and that God made manifeſt his indignation againſt the woman who kept the king in ſin, who exhauſted the finances, and built a magnificent palace with the ſubſtance of the citizens. Theſe murmurs were repeated within the king's hearing, by men who diſapproved, yet laughed at them, and by women who envied and curſed madame de Monteſpan.

The king, to comfort her for theſe cruel cenſures, gave a marſhal's batoon to Vivonne her brother, an honour which he merited a year afterwards by defeating the Spaniſh and Dutch fleets in the road of Palermo.

Lewis made a diſtinction between his wife and his miſtreſs, which he would have been the firſt to bluſh at, if the prince who had the moſt attention to the laws of politeneſs had not been wholly blinded by paſſion:

ſion: the queen one day loſt the meſſe and a thouſand crowns: 'Let us calculate how much this amounts to 'in a year,' ſaid the king to her. He did not calcu-'late with madame de Monteſpan.

The ungrateful, the perfidious madame de Monteſpan no otherwiſe requited the queen's goodneſs than by inceſſantly ſpreading new ſnares for her: ſometimes ſhe alarmed her with falſe ſuſpicions: ſometimes ſhe forced her into little parties, from which it would have been more prudent to have been abſent: ſhe often detained her at cards 'till two hours after midnight, and then made the king obſerve that * a devotee could be fond of amuſement.

The dutcheſs de Richelieu was the baſe inſtrument of this treachery: and how was this lady of honour rewarded for thus betraying her royal miſtreſs? ſhe received ſome billets from the king while he was with the army, and theſe ſhe ſhewed to her friends as very affectionate, but which would have only been thought complaiſant, if madame de Maintenon had ſhewn thoſe ſhe received at the ſame time.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was greatly perplexed between her reflexions on the conſequences of granting the king favours, and the danger of refuſing them, between her fear of being too laviſh of them, and her jealouſy of his ſeeking them elſewhere. The king was not much concerned about the ſins of the heart, but he did not indulge the ſame illuſion about the ſins of the fleſh. But madame de Monteſpan was perfectly eaſy, a capuchin friar had removed all her ſcruples, by whining out to her theſe words, *Woman! many ſins are remitted to you becauſe you have loved much.* The moſt auſtere order of the church will always furniſh the moſt indulgent confeſſors. †

Mad me

---

* Letter from madame de Maintenon to madame de Dangeau.

† Miſſionaries of the biſhop d'Agen.

Madame de Maintenon finding that ſhe could not procure an abſolute parting, would at leaſt have prevailed upon the marchioneſs to confine himſelf to friendſhip: but madame de Monteſpan was not able to reſolve upon that: ſo much beauty ſtill, and ſo much pride, with difficulty ſubmits to hold only the ſecond place, which never appears to be ſo ſecure as the firſt. However ſhe was under a neceſſity of taking a reſolution immediately, for the king demanded an abſolute anſwer, with calm ſolicitations that expreſſed deſires more ardent than fixed. Madame de Monteſpan, who was doubtleſs conſumed with the ſame fires, determined to ſin again, and to continue to reign.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Madame de Maintenon's journey to Barege.

MAdame de Maintenon now left the court without regret, and at laſt taſted the pleaſure of being once more free. The king ſent his orders to marſhal d'Albret, who was governor of Guyenne, concerning the manner in which he would have his ſon received. I have ſeen this letter: Lewis mentions madame de Maintenon to him with the perplexity of a man who was beginning to love, and who knew that the marſhal had loved her. The duke du Maine was received at Bourdeaux with all the honours that could have been paid to the Dauphin: probably his father was deſirous of accuſtoming people to that elevation he was preparing for him. In the midſt of this magnificence, madame de Maintenon was not able to repreſs ſome melancholy emotions at the ſight of château-trompette, or help making a compariſon between what ſhe had been, and what ſhe then was. 'There, ſaid ſhe, to 'monſieur d'Albret, is the place where I received my 'firſt education: but I aſſure you that I know a pri-'ſon ſtill more ſevere, and that my bed is not better 'than my cradle.'

Long

Long griefs and great anxiety ſucceeded to theſe momentary pleaſures. The duke du Maine was ſeized with an ague which after ſeventeen fits brought him into the utmoſt danger. Madame de Maintenon oppreſt with ſorrow expected his death every moment, and wiſhed for her own: what dreadful news had ſhe to ſend the king! what reproaches to expect from madame de Monteſpan, when ſhe preſented her the lifeleſs body of a child ſo dear to her! what a loſs for herſelf, what a cruel trial to a heart ſo tender as hers!

The young prince, by the ſkill of Fagon his phyſician, or the efforts of nature, recovered from this diſeaſe: this was the beginning of Fagon's fortune, which followed the progreſs of madame de Maintenon's, his candour, his diſcretion and his abilities being every day more known to her, and every day more eſteemed.

The baths of Bagneres, and of Barege, which were tried alternately and were at firſt ineffectual, at length ſtrengthened the duke du Maine's leg, and freed him from his lameneſs. Madame de Maintenon addreſſed always to the king the accounts ſhe conſtantly ſent of every alteration in the duke's health; he was extremely pleaſed with her letters; the tender ſolicitude ſhe ſhewed for the duke du Maine heightened the charm he found in them, and the ſolidity of her underſtanding removed all the prejudices he had conceived againſt *the wit*.

She paſſed through Poitou in her return, viſited all her relations, and was received by them as one now in favour, ſhe expreſſed the ſame tenderneſs for them as if ſhe had always been ſo, reconciled herſelf ſincerely to thoſe who had uſurped her eſtate, renewed her friendſhip with the Villettes, who after her converſion had forgot her; paid the penſion ſhe owed to the convent of Urſelines at Niort, learned that ſhe was deſcended from one of the beſt families of the province, without being more vain for that knowledge.

Madame

Madame de Monteſpan and her ſiſter the abbeſſe of Fontevrault went to meet the prince. It was therefore reported that madame de Maintenon was diſmiſſed from her employment, that the marchioneſs was ordered to tell her ſo, and the abbeſs to comfort her in her diſgrace. No one doubted of the truth of this report when the ſecret quarrels between the favourite and the governeſs * were known, which for two years had embittered their minds, and laid the foundation of an eternal hatred. But it is certain that the journey the marchioneſs took to meet her, was leſs from a tender impatience to ſee her ſon, than to ſooth madame de Maintenon by ſuch an inſtance of reſpect: her friendſhip was now become neceſſary to the haughty favourite,

* 'I will give you a little view of the inſide of the 'cards, which will ſurprize you; it is, that the per'fect friendſhip between madame de Monteſpan and 'her travelling friend, has been for theſe two years 'an utter averſion. It is a keenneſs of reſentment, 'an antipathy, a contrariety like that of white and 'black. You aſk from whence it proceeds; it is becauſe 'the inferior friend has an haughtineſs that makes 'her rebel againſt the orders of her ſuperior; ſhe 'does not love to obey; ſhe is willing to comply with 'the father, but not with the mother. It is to oblige 'him that ſhe undertakes this journey, and not in the 'leaſt to gratify her; ſhe gives an account of every 'thing that paſſes to him, and not to her. He is 'chided for having ſo much regard to a woman in'toxicated with vanity; but it is not thought that this 'affection will continue, unleſs the averſion ceaſes, 'or the ſucceſs of this voyage cauſes a change in the 'heart of ſome perſons. This ſecret has been rolling 'like an earthquake, under ground, theſe ſix months; 'it begins a little to take air. I believe you will be 'ſurprized at it. The friends of the friend are much 'concerned at it, and it is thought that ſome of them 'have felt the ill effects of this miſunderſtanding.' Sévigné's Letters.

rite, becauſe abſence had increaſed her intereſt with the king.

Nothing could be more agreeable than the ſurprize they concerted for the king. He did not expect the duke du Maine till the next day, and he ſaw him enter his apartment without any remains of his former lameneſs: and only led by madame de Maintenon, 'Ah! madam, ſaid he to the governeſs, what plea-'ſure do you give me!' Theſe words ſo expreſſive of grateful joy, ſufficiently rewarded her for all her trouble and fatigue, the praiſes of kings are generally cold and reſerved, the gratitude of Lewis was ſincere, and his acknowledgments unreſtrained.

The whole court was ſoon acquainted with the favourable reception madame de Maintenon had received from the king; Louvois as eagerly ſolicitous to court female favourites, as to ruin the men, flew to her houſe, followed by all the courtiers: ſome would kiſs her hand, others her robe, ſhe laughed at them all; the flatterer is always malignant: ſome emotions of pleaſure, and perhaps pride, which eſcaped madame de Maintenon *, in thoſe moments, were ſeverely cenſured by the very perſons whoſe ſervile homage had occaſioned them.

CHAPTER LIX.

Madame de Maintenon *remains at court.*

WHEN ſhe returned to court, ſhe found her ſituation was not altered for the better, the ſame cauſes for complaint ſtill ſubſiſted, little cabals, and

* I am ſurprized at what I have heard of madame de Maintenon, ſhe is ſaid to be ſtrangely altered, that ſhe is not the admiration of every one as formerly, and that in her the old proverb is verified; this gives occaſion for many fine moral and chriſtian reflexions to my little friend de Coolanges.———The marchioneſs de Sevigné's letters of November and December, 1675.

and ſevere reproaches, were renewed on both ſides. They quarrelled without reaſon, and were reconciled without forgiveneſs. Madame de Monteſpan was too capricious not to be guilty of many faults, and too great to acknowledge them. Madame de Maintenon was too haughty to endure them, and too much offended to be capable of pardoning them.

It was indeed ſurpriſing, that there ſhould be continual diſſentions, complaints, reproaches, and already a kind of rivalſhip between two women, whoſe ſituations were ſo very different; but if madame de Monteſpan had the advantage of a higher rank, madame de Maintenon poſſeſſed that of an incorruptible virtue. The diſtance between the marchioneſs and the governeſs of her children, was leſſened by the king's eſteem for the latter.

In the city, all ranks are diſtinguiſhed by birth, and by employments under the crown: in the court, by the king's favour alone; and that kind of favour which madame de Maintenon enjoyed, was as proper to raiſe, as that which the marchioneſs poſſeſſed, to humble. It was not ſtrange therefore, that madame de Maintenon ſhould return the inſults of the haughty miſtreſs with equal haughtineſs, and that ſhe ſhould, at leaſt, diſdain all inferiority to her, in a place where the glance of the prince exalts the ſervant, and makes the miſtreſs nothing.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan expected that gratitude ſhould engage madame de Maintenon to endure every thing without murmuring; but obligations ſo often remembred by one, and repaid by the other with ſervices ſo great, ſo many injurious reproaches, had cancelled all claims; a diſmiſſion ſo many times demanded, had reduced her, by whom it was refuſed, to a level with her who inſiſted upon it's being given; that it was not poſſible for madame de Maintenon to guard againſt the violence of her reſentment in thoſe altercations, in which the ſofteſt and moſt grateful diſpoſition appears with ſuch diſadvantages, and is ſhocked by the benefit that is accompanied by upbraidings. Thoſe who indulge themſelves in the liberty of ſaying

all, give a right to others to anſwer as truly. Thus, without forgetting what ſhe owed to madame de Monteſpan, madame de Maintenon might ſometimes allow that pride to appear, which the favourite, through jealouſy or caprice, endeavoured to depreſs. 'Shall 'the governeſs of my children,' ſaid the marchioneſs to her one day, 'preſume to oppoſe me?' 'If it is 'diſgraceful to be their governeſs,' replied madame de Maintenon, 'what would it be to be their mo-'ther?'

Yet after affronts ſo mortifying, reproaches ſo ſevere, theſe two ladies ſtill continued to live together: they were inceſſantly paſſing from quarrels to reconciliations, and from reconciliations to quarrels. It muſt certainly be, that madame de Monteſpan was juſt enough to repair the faults ſhe committed through the violence of her temper; or that madame de Maintenon had that aſcendant, which a virtuous woman will always have over one who grieves that ſhe is not ſo.

Lewis, who was now fated, ſeemed attached to the marchioneſs, rather through fear than love; this occaſioned new bitterneſs in madame de Monteſpan, towards madame de Maintenon, whom ſhe ſuſpected of giving counſels too grave, or an example too dangerous. Sometimes Louvois is ſent by the king to prevail upon them to be friends; ſometimes the king himſelf conjures them not to hate each other. 'It 'is eaſier for me, ſaid he, to give peace to all Eu-'rope, than to give it to two women.'

He was often a witneſs to their quarrels, and often an arbitrator between them: Madame de Maintenon was ſeldom condemned. The woman who is no longer loved, is always the aggreſſor towards the object of a beginning paſſion. The king happening to find them one day extremely angry with each other, inſiſted upon knowing the cauſe of their quarrel. 'If your ma-'jeſty, ſaid madame de Maintenon, will ſtep into this 'cloſet, I will inform you.'

The king complied, and madame de Maintenon began by giving him a lively repreſentation of all ſhe had

had ſuffered, and ended with repeated intreaties, to diſpenſe with her from living any longer with a lady who was cruelty itſelf. 'Cruelty, cried the king, ah! 'how can that be? whenever ſhe hears of any cala-'mity, I always obſerve her eyes full of tears. And 'I, reſumed madame de Maintenon, perceive that your 'Majeſty is ſtill enſlaved by her. Ah! Sire, is it thus 'you keep the promiſe you made to monſieur Boſſuet, 'to the queen, to your people, to God? She weeps 'for the unhappy, how many does ſhe make ſo?'

The king intreated her not to leave the court yet. 'And muſt I then, ſaid ſhe, be condemned to ſtifle 'the grief I feel at being obliged to paſs my life with 'two perſons, who live in a ſtate of actual ſin, and 'who give to Europe the ſhameful ſpectacle of a wo-'man who is unfaithful to her huſband, and a man, 'who has taken away the wife of his neighbour by 'force.'

She repreſented to him, that honour required ſhe ſhould throw herſelf into a convent, that by being ſhut up in Vaugirard, ſhe ſhould only ſacrifice her liberty, but by ſettling at court, ſhe ſacrificed her reputation: that ſome particular perſons knew what part ſhe acted in it, but that the publick might ſuſpect her of being an accomplice in the irregularities ſhe was a witneſs of. The king aſſured her, that his preſent engagement ſhould not continue long, and doubtleſs, was deſirous of telling her, that he de-ſigned to enter into another.

Madame de Maintenon was become as neceſſary to him, as ſhe was to the duke du Maine. Ever ſince her return from Barege, the king had appeared eaſy, chearful, and deſirous of continuing ſo. He was al-ready of an age to ſeek in the ſociety of women for amuſement, rather than pleaſure. In the converſation of madame de Maintenon, of which abſence had taught him the value and the neceſſity, he found what he wiſhed; he hated devotees, and did not ſuſpect madame de Maintenon to be one. The great art of being always miſtreſs of herſelf, the ſtill harder art of judging of mankind, without too

great confidence in her own penetration, or too much delicacy in her notions; the talent of regulating her conduct according to ſome fixed and certain views; the habit of obſerving every thing, and of taking advantage of all; theſe were the qualities which diſtinguiſhed madame de Maintenon from all other women who endeavoured to pleaſe him. She knew the king, and knew how to amuſe him; the firſt was eaſy, becauſe his character was ſtrongly marked: the ſecond was difficult, becauſe there was great languor in his diſpoſition, great delicacy in his taſte. She never appeared before him, but with the graces of ſoftneſs and good humour; with tender anxiety for the duke du Maine; compaſſionate propoſals for the poor; complaiſant attention to ſtories a thouſand times repeated, and with the appearance of a higher, and new taſte for uniform amuſements. Every day ſhe ſeemed more worthy of eſteem, each virtue of hers, gave riſe to new ſentiments in the king; in her he ſaw unblemiſhed chaſtity, candour without harſhneſs, and piety without ſcruples: and it was by concealing part, that ſhe made him reliſh the whole.

What were her deſigns, it will be aſked, by this ſolicitude to pleaſe? Her deſigns were ſuch, as a virtuous mind may indulge, which is not wholly free from vanity, and ſlightly touched with ambition. She was deſirous of being eſteemed by the court, while ſhe continued in it; and of being regretted by it when ſhe retired.

She conſulted the abbé Gobelin upon the laſt converſation ſhe had with the king. The abbé comparing the good ſhe was able to do at Paris, with that which ſhe might poſſibly do at court, decided that ſhe ought to remain there. The duke du Maine, indeed, was a ſtrong attachment, and the king's eſteem formed a new tye; but when ſhe called to mind the inſolence and rage of madame de Monteſpan, every conſideration gave way to the reſentment excited by that remembrance. She declared her extreme reluctance to her confeſſor: ſhe acknowledged the-

the cauſe of it: he ordered her from God himſelf, to ſubdue that reluctance: he ſhewed her the particular deſigns which heaven had upon her, attributed to a miracle of grace, the growing tenderneſs of the prince for her; as if the mere human effects that were produced, were not ſufficient to explain their motive.

Nothing more ſoothes the vanity of the human heart, either in great proſperity, or diſtreſs, than the notion (injurious perhaps to the Divinity) of the immediate aſſiſtance of the ſupreme Being. In one of theſe moments of fervour, madame de Maintenon perſuaded herſelf, that God had deſtined her to convert the king; and that ſhe might be near him to carry on this great work, ſhe ſubjected herſelf to all the petulant humours of madame de Monteſpan: her pride, which was wounded by this ſubmiſſion, was ſoothed again by the notion, that her actions were under the particular direction of the common father of the human race.

She reſumed, with ardor and delight, the education of the duke du Maine: the abbé Gobelin, to eaſe her of part of her cares, engaged la Fontaine to write thoſe fables, which will live as long as there are children to educate, and men to judge of the moſt proper means; and to quiet, in ſome degree, her ſcruples, promiſed to be god-father to the firſt prince that madame de Monteſpan ſhould bring into the world.

CHAPTER LX.

The Year 1675.

MADAME de Monteſpan, always haughty, capricious, and imprudent, by forcing the king to fear her, ceaſed to poſſeſs his love. The king lived with her in that reſtraint, as fatal to ſatisfied, as favourable to deſiring love.

He was conſtantly employed in preventing, by tender aſſiduities, thoſe ſallies of rage which it is eaſy to ſuffer, and thoſe ſharp railleries, which it is difficult to forgive.

Frequent returns of the rheumatiſm, which the baths

of Bourdon and Vichi had not been able to cure, increaſed the peeviſhneſs in the temper of the miſtreſs, already ſo unequal, and ſo dependent upon every alteration in the weather. Lewis never ſpoke to her, but with the extremeſt caution; never ventured to oppoſe her, but with the gentleſt perſuaſion: this attention to pleaſe, this fear of offending, were often repaid with ſudden and unforeſeen guſts of ill humour. The king, often tired with her caprices, but always patient, treated love with dignity, and replied no otherwiſe, to the reproaches of his miſtreſs, than by haſtily quitting her; when alone, her mind was agitated with all the pangs of ambition; the fretfulneſs of ill health, vexed that ſhe was forty years old, uncertain of her place. She ſaw that there wanted only a look of approbation caſt upon another woman, and anſwered by a conſenting glance, a pain in the head, the remonſtrances of a confeſſor, a moment of repentance or diſguſt, to make it neceſſary that ſhe ſhould throw herſelf into a cloiſter.

The king, after hearing a ſermon preached by Bourdaloue, who uttered truths without palliation or inſolence, went to the apartment of madame de Maintenon; there he deplored his infatuation, he groaned for his ſin. Madame de Maintenon joined her endeavours to thoſe of the jeſuit, to aſſiſt the ſecret workings of grace: from that time madame de Monteſpan loſt all her intereſt in the king's heart. Bourdaloue, coming to take leave of the king, 'You ſhall be ſatisfied with 'my conduct, ſaid Lewis to him, madam de Monteſ-'pan is at Clagni.' 'God,' anſwered the preacher, 'would be more ſo, if Clagni was at forty leagues 'diſtance from Verſailles.'

It was not neceſſary to animate the zeal of father Bourdaloue; no order of religious, ever produced a man, who more ſtrongly recommended purity of manners; and his ſermons and conduct, are the beſt refutation of the provincial letters. However, madame de Maintenon, and (influenced by her example) the dutcheſs de Richelieu likewiſe, had frequent converſations with him, in which they exhorted him to perfect the king's repentance, inſtructed him how to captivate

captivate his attention, and engage his eſteem; armed him with hints that were moſt likely to ſtrike him, and directed him how to chuſe favourable moments to wreſtle ſucceſsfully with an enemy, who had cauſed one of his brethren to be reprimanded, for having too well performed his duty.

The jealouſy of madame de Monteſpan, kept the king in continual reſtraint: he had already ſacrificed the maids of honour to her uneaſy doubts; it was ſuſpected that they had all been diſmiſſed to preſerve the reputation of one who was the cauſe of it: but it is certain, that madame de Monteſpan looked upon this eſtabliſhment as an hydra, which it was neceſſary to deſtroy at once, and fill their places with ladies of the palace, of uncommon uglineſs: mademoiſelle de Guedany * appeared at court, lively, obliging, tender, vain and ſilly. The king ſeemed to divert himſelf with her; this was enough to throw madame de Monteſpan into a fit of rage: 'She is but a child, ſaid the king to her.' 'It is children that I fear, replied the 'marchioneſs, and eſpecially children of love.'

The counteſs de Grammont, † whoſe huſband had forgot that he had married her, in London, made ſome attempts upon the king's heart. She was eaſily removed, by accuſing her of Janſeniſm: in the eyes of Lewis, it was not poſſible to be beautiful, and an heretick.

Madame de Soubiſe became a candidate for the king's love. Her huſband ordered her to follow him to Flanders; ſhe murmured at this order; the king did not approve of thoſe murmurs, and ſhe obeyed. When ſhe returned again to court, the king obſerved, that ſhe had a greater quantity of rouge upon her face, and had a tooth leſs. Madame de Monteſpan therefore no longer feared a rival in her.

* Natural daughter of Henry Jules de Bourbon, duke of Anguyer, by the widow of the count de Marans, legitimated, and afterwards married to the marquis de Baſſay.

† Elizabeth Hamilton.

One rival was ſcarce ſubdued, when another entered the liſt; madame de Ludre ingenuouſly confeſſed her deſigns. The dutcheſs of Orleans playing one day with a compaſs, ſaid to her, 'I muſt put out theſe 'eyes that do ſo much miſchief.' 'Do, madame, re-'plied ſhe, ſince they have not yet done all that I 'would have them.'

Between this lady, and the dutcheſs de Richelieu, there was a great connexion, which drew all the fury of madame de Monteſpan upon the latter. The dutcheſs cleared herſelf of the imputation ſhe charged her with, proteſting, that ſhe repented too deeply of having been acceſſary to the king's firſt amour, to engage him in new ones. Madame de Maintenon ſaid, it was not probable, that the king could entertain a ſerious paſſion for a woman like madame de Ludre, who had faults ſo diſguſting: ſhe was anſwered, that ſhe did not yet know all the caprices of a depraved taſte; that the king loved the duke du Maine better than all his other children, becauſe he was lame; and that he would prefer madame de Ludre to all other women, becauſe ſhe ſtuttered.

Madame de Monteſpan, ingenious in tormenting herſelf, found cauſes for jealouſy and apprehenſion, even among her own relations. The marchioneſs de Thianges, wiſhed to ſee one of her daughters in the place of her ſiſter, and herſelf in that of madame de Maintenon. She had given into devotion, and with ſo little oſtentation, that a ſervant preſenting her wine at table, ſhe ſaid; 'This man does not know that I 'am a devotee.'

This appearance of auſterity, did not prevent her from mixing in all the intrigues of the court: ſhe was enraged, at being no longer admitted to the king's private parties, and complained of the favour ſhe enjoyed, who ſucceeded to her, as if it had been an uſurpation of her right. Her two daughters, madame de Nevers, and mademoiſelle de Thianges, ſeemed to her worthy of the firſt rank. They were both extremely beautiful: Lewis invited them to all his parties of pleaſure; his deſires

inceſ-

inceſſantly wandered from one to the other, but could never fix; he loved her who was preſent, but the abſent beauty always ſeemed moſt worthy of his love.

Madame de Monteſpan hoped to guard herſelf againſt theſe domeſtick ſnares, by ceaſing to keep the king in reſtraint, and reſtoring him to the whole court. To that ſolitary life which her jealouſy had preſcribed him, ſucceeded one of diſſipation and ſplendor. The days were divided between play, hunting, ſhews and entertainments. Sometimes madame de Monteſpan, negligently dreſt, would play with the queen in her chamber, whom by a glance to the dutcheſs de Richelieu, ſhe could get rid of in an inſtant: at other times covered with jewels, followed by all the courtiers, ſhe would ſhew herſelf in all the luſtre of beauty, to amaze the ambaſſadors, to eclipſe her nieces, and fill madame de Maintenon with deſpair.

The king ſet out for the army in Flanders, and madame de Monteſpan for the waters of Bourbon: the ladies appeared emulous of the honour of accompanying her; ſhe received their ſolicitations with the diſdain of a perſon who is ſated with publick ſervility. She ſtaid three days at Maintenon, where ſhe received two couriers, with letters from the king, which gave great uneaſineſs to the lady of the caſtle. The marchioneſs affected to make a myſtery of what theſe letters contained, and madame de Maintenon, who, tho' very deſirous of quitting the court, was not willing to be diſmiſſed from it, was afraid that her diſgrace was concerting even in her own houſe. She was at length relieved from her apprehenſions, by madame de Monteſpan, who was more capable of malice than treachery.

When the king returned, the favour of madame de Maintenon, and the rage of madame de Monteſpan were increaſed. The queen uſed her utmoſt endeavours to keep the firſt at court, and to give the ſecond a diſguſt to it. She ſometimes carried them with her to the monaſteries, to accuſtom one to the world, and the other to retirement. One day when they attended her to the convent of the Carmelites; Madame de Monteſ-

pan propoſed a lottery, and ſent for every thing which ſhe thought could be uſeful to the nuns: theſe pious ſiſters had ſome ſcruples about receiving preſents from the miſtreſs of the king: the agnus's, crucifix's, chaplets, all theſe ſacred trifles ſeemed polluted by the impure hand that offered them. That they might accept of them with ſafety, they permitted the marchioneſs de Monteſpan to pay for the lots, and intreated madame de Maintenon to diſtribute them. Siſter Louiſa of the houſe of Mercy, won a Magdalen. Madame de Monteſpan looked at the image, and was greatly affected; thoſe torn and diſhevelled hairs, thoſe claſped hands, thoſe eyes ſwimming in tears, that countenance in which was expreſſed the extremes of ſhame, love, hope, and fear; the preſence of Valliere who was all this, the ſhame at being now what Valliere had been, her former wiſh to imitate in her repentance, her whom ſhe had more than imitated in her ſin; the hope of preſerving like her the charms of her perſon, or of adding to them the inſinuating ſoftneſs of grief, the ſilence of the whole aſſembly, attentive to the progreſs of theſe reflexions, or aſtoniſhed at the ſalutary artifices of grace, altogether threw madame de Monteſpan into a perplexity and uneaſineſs, but ill diſguiſed under a forced gaiety, and augmented by the queſtions ſhe aſked madame de la Valliere. 'Tell me, I beſeech you, ſaid ſhe, to her, are you as happy as you are reported to be?' 'No, anſwered the Carmelite. 'I am not happy, but I am contented. And you, 'madam? As for me, replied madame de Monteſpan, 'I am neither the one nor the other. See there the 'difference, interrupted madame de Maintenon, be'tween Magdalen a penitent, and Magdalen a ſinner.'

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan being wholly diſconcerted, put an end to a lottery in which all the black billets fell to her; but as ſhe was preparing to leave the convent, ſhe entered into the moſt trifling converſation imaginable, and affecting great ſprightlineſs and unconcern, ſhe aſked madame de la Valliere, what ſhe ſhould ſay from her to the brother of the duke of Orleans? 'All that you pleaſe,' replied the Valliere

Valliere with the ſenſibility of a lover and the indifference of a Carmelite.

Madame de Maintenon at length obtained permiſſion to ſpend a month at her own eſtate: ſhe did not take with her to this agreeable receſs thoſe friends of a day who in others ſtill love nothing but themſelves, but her old acquaintance to whom ſhe was always faithful; Montchevreuil, la Tourte, Nantouillet, Barillon, Coulanges, amiable philoſophers, in whom gaiety was not deſtroyed, but corrected by wiſdom. Courtin was deſirous of being of this party; madame de Maintenon told him ſhe had no room for his footmen. 'Ah, 'Madam, replied Courtin, at court there is always 'room for footmen, but none for friends.'

Some perſons accuſed her of making herſelf inacceſſible to all thoſe who recalled to her remembrance the diſtreſſes of her youth, or who were likely to ſolicit her intereſt. Others attributed her taſte for retirement to a deſign of getting free from her friends and relations: thoſe by whom ſhe was moſt eſteemed, were ſurpriſed at a temper ſo reſerved and unſociable, ſuſpended their judgment of her conduct, and exclaimed: 'who can be depended upon, if it be true 'that ſo good an underſtanding as hers has not been 'able to guard her againſt the intoxication of vanity?'

Theſe cenſures increaſed her love of retirement, ſhe ſtole herſelf from the aſſiduities of thoſe unjuſt men, whoſe expectations and importunities betrayed an intereſted friendſhip. Tired of adoration ſhe ſhut herſelf up at Maintenon: driven from thence by the murmurs that purſued her to that retreat, ſhe appeared again at court, where ſhe found only ſervile courtiers, and diſcontented friends. Her pride was leſs flattered by the homage paid her by the former, than her candor was offended at it; and the injuſtice of the latter excited leſs indignation than grief.

The kindneſs the king expreſt for her conſoled her for all this uneaſineſs. Lewis ſpoke of her as his ſecond, and ſometimes as of his firſt friend, but the flatterers by repeating thoſe obliging things almoſt made her hate them. Every one ſeemed to give way to her

newly

newly acquired power; ſhe diſpoſed as ſhe pleaſed of all who belonged to madame de Richelieu. This dutcheſs forced her to accept the homage paid her by the ladies; one would bring her her gloves, another would preſent a napkin to her on her knees, and died with deſire to kiſs her charming hands; this lady would help to undreſs her, that would lull her to ſleep. All were ſolicitous to pleaſe her, and tired her with civilities. Madame de Richelieu maintained that ſhe ought to aſſume great ſtate and reſerve, 'You 'muſt forget, ſaid ſhe to her, what you have been, 'if you would make others forget it.' Madame de Maintenon did not long give way to this intoxication of vanity, ſhe enjoyed her pre-eminence, and laughed at the ingenious ſervility of the ladies, and at her own weakneſs in having permitted it.

Mean time Paris was full of diſcourſe upon the heighth of favour to which madame de Maintenon had arrived: a viſit paid by the duke of Orleans at Maintenon, a ſhort abſence of madame de Monteſpan, occaſioned by a ſudden fit of capriciouſneſs, by the fatigue of the ceremonial, by a ſlight indiſpoſition, gave room for various conjectures; nothing eſcaped remarks at court; tears, frowns, joy, affectation, all were differently explained: they obſerved with prejudice, they judged with the ſame: they ſaw ſmiles of ſatisfaction in the countenance of madame de Maintenon, clouds of grief on that of the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. Some wiſhed for a change, others feared it; the greater part were perſuaded that it was already reſolved on. Madame de Maintenon was by many perſons accuſed of ingratitude, but no one ſuſpected her virtue. The marchioneſs de Sevigné, who was a witneſs of all theſe different cenſures, has preſerved them to us faithfully: according to her madame de Maintenon was not even ſuſpected of aſpiring to the place of madame de Monteſpan: ſhe was afterwards ſeen in a much higher, but without being charged with making uſe of any efforts to obtain it, without being ſuſpected of laying ſchemes for it, or of purchaſing it by guilt. It muſt neceſſarily be that the reputation of madame

madame de Maintenon was very ſolidly eſtabliſhed, that it ſuffered not the ſlighteſt taint in a place where actions may ſometimes eſcape criticiſm, but where intentions are always judged of with malignity.

Madame de Monteſpan convinced that ſeeming favour often produces real, exerted what intereſt ſhe had ſtill left in the king's heart to regain all that ſhe had loſt; although oppreſt with the moſt violent deſpair, ſhe affected an exceſs of gaiety; ſeemed more ſecure than ever of the power of her charms, tho' ſhe repined at their decay: ſometimes a negligent dreſs expreſſed her confidence in them, ſometimes the moſt ſplendid ornaments ſhewed how well that confidence was founded: ſhe would one day receive the adorations of her lover with indifference; the next, ſhe would lean her head familiarly on the king's ſhoulder, with an air as if ſhe had ſaid, I am more beloved than ever.

CHAPTER LXI.

The Year 1677.

EACH day brought with it new teſtimonies of the king's eſteem for madame de Maintenon. In thoſe entertainments he gave in the country, he would not ſit at table but aſſiſted in ſerving all the ladies, although his whole attention was fixed upon one object. He was afraid of the jealous looks of the miſtreſs he had, and was awed by the ſeverity of her whom he wiſhed to have.

Madame de Monteſpan perceived all that he endeavoured to conceal from her: but jealouſy cannot prevent what it fears: ſhe durſt not accuſe madame de Maintenon of loving the king, ſhe accuſed her with the crime of being loved by him, deprived her lover of pleaſures, and reproached him leſs with his paſſion than his ſin. The king who trembled leſt this inclination ſhould be thought ridiculous, was charmed to find it judged only criminal. He was now diſpenſed with from making a formal confeſſion, ſecure of being believed,

believed, he denied it but faintly, and madame de Monteſpan by her imprudence and her rage, did all that the king had in vain attempted to do. Madame de Maintenon would never have known that the king loved her, if the marchioneſs had not informed her: madame de Monteſpan ought to have repreſt the idea, and by raillery and contempt, placed it in the claſs of impoſſibilities.

Lewis had not yet renounced the hope of triumphing over the chaſtity of madame de Maintenon: he reſolved to hazard every thing, yet had not power to ſpeak. When at a diſtance from her he did not think it poſſible that ſhe ſhould reſiſt him, when he was with her, he had not courage to make the attempt; thoſe hopes with which his rank inſpired him, were deſtroyed by that awe and timidity which the preſence of acknowledged virtue impreſſes.

One day when he had made a party for hunting, he wandered from his train, and went to ſurpriſe madame de Maintenon in her caſtle: ſhe had left it but a few moments before, the king imagined ſhe fled from him, and this ſuſpicion increaſed his hopes: he went to Maintenon again ſome days afterwards, and then ſaw how fatal an ill timed reſpect was to love.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was overwhelmed with deſpair at the idea of what theſe gallant ſurpriſes indicated. She exclaimed againſt the ingratitude of madame de Maintenon, but ſhe did not reproach her with having ſacrificed her virtue. She is too wiſe, ſaid they at Paris, to raiſe the ſtandard of ſuch treachery with ſo little hope of enjoying the fruits of it long; if ſhe opens the way to inconſtancy, ſhe will ſerve but as a path to others that are younger and more beautiful than herſelf. Such was the reaſoning of inquiſitive perſons, who have imperfect informations, but are very ready to draw conſequences from them, who are incapable of attributing to virtue what may be laid to the account of prudence, and revenge themſelves on favourites by falſehood and malignity.

Madame de Maintenon, calm and reſigned amidſt the agitations that ſhook the court, ſeemed to her friends wholly

wholly indifferent, and to the king ſuperior to all paſſions. Madame de Monteſpan herſelf ſaid to Lewis, 'Sire, 'this woman will lead you further than you imagine.'

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan, eager to enjoy the little time ſhe had to reign, gave a looſe to luxury, and ſated every paſſion. Madam de Maintenon was not able to conceive how a woman immerſed in vice, with eyes all wild and wandering, cheeks glowing with paſſion, a trembling hand, and unquiet heart, durſt raiſe her head, and inſolently brave the publick hatred and contempt. She grieved to ſee the king give to the affairs of ſtate, and the neceſſities of his people, an exhauſted body, and weakened mind, and, if the expreſſion may be allowed, the remains only of what he had been.

Madame de Monteſpan, who ſought to keep Lewis from all other women, detached him only from herſelf: ſhe gave him a taſte for true happineſs, by ſhewing him the emptineſs of falſe pleaſures. He loſt the little eſteem he had hitherto preſerved for a miſtreſs ſo looſe and ſo abandoned: thoſe charms once certain of awakening his deſires, now found him cold and indifferent, and he was almoſt as free from the ſurprizes of paſſion, as from the tenderneſs of real love. Habit ſometimes brought him back to her, for whom he no longer felt any thing but contempt.

Mademoiſelle de Tours, and the count de Toulouſe, were the laſt fruits of this expiring paſſion. Lewis was ſo much aſhamed of having violated the promiſe he had given his people, that madame de Monteſpan lay in with as much ſecreſy as at firſt. Madame de Maintenon would not accept the care of theſe children, and both father and mother were rejoiced at her refuſals: the king, becauſe he hoped ſhe would have more time to give him, madame de Monteſpan, becauſe ſhe thought that being leſs attached to the court, ſhe would leave it ſooner. The children were concealed and brought up by madame d'Arbon, wife to monſieur le Tellier's intendant.

Madame de Maintenon was agreeably employed in the care of the duke du Maine; his health daily improved, and his ripening wit began to fulfil thoſe hopes which madame de Maintenon had with pleaſure entertained:

entertained: his perſon was extremely lovely, his governeſs had known how to load him with careſſes without ſpoiling his temper, and to inſpire him with modeſty, without repreſſing his vivacity. Seeing from his window one day the duke de Montauzier paſſing by, he cried out, *See the enſign of authority, monſieur de Montauzier*: words which painted exactly this auſtere nobleman.

The prince of Condé chiding the little duke for the noiſe he made when he was at play, 'Would to God, 'monſieur, replied the child, that I made as much 'noiſe as you do.' Madame de Maintenon exhorting him once to correct ſome little haughtineſs in his behaviour, recommended to him to imitate the king, who ſhewed more complaiſance to every one than he did. 'It is eaſy for him to be complaiſant, anſwered the 'prince, he is ſure of his rank, and I am in doubt of 'of mine.' Theſe firſt ſparks of wit fell upon a heart already burning with love for the governeſs, which by imperceptible degrees was aſcending to the greateſt heighth.

Fagon thought another journey to Barege was neceſſary for the prince. The king would have diſpenſed with the attendance of madame de Maintenon, who, as fond of liberty as Lewis was of ſeeing and hearing her, indulged her tenderneſs for the young prince, whom ſhe could not reſolve to be abſent from, and prevailed upon the king to conſent, that ſhe ſhould go with him. Monſieur d'Aubigné, who was then at Coignac, ſhewed his reſpect and attachment to his ſovereign, by the reception he gave the duke du Maine: this was the only ſatisfaction, which, during the courſe of a long life, he ever gave his ſiſter. The letters of madame de Maintenon ſhew the joy ſhe felt, when ſhe found herſelf again in the midſt of her family: yet ſhe only ſaw relations who were either poor, ridiculous, or hereticks: but her candour was not deſtroyed, tho' her taſte was refined.

At Murcay ſhe made a diſcovery which proved very uſeful to her: ſhe there found the *ſecret memoirs* of her grand-

grandfather, and in the character of that illuſtrious man, ſhe found the greateſt part of her own virtues and defects: like him, ſhe was open, ſevere, impatient, diſintereſted, incapable of ſoothing the paſſions of others. It has been ſaid, that the ſoul of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné paſſed into the body of his granddaughter: the qualities of our minds are hereditary, and the order of ſucceſſion is not perceived, becauſe it is not always regular. Thoſe memoirs furniſhed madame de Maintenon, with agreeable ſtories to tell the king, and gave her an opportunity to ſhew him, that her birth entitled her to a higher ſtate than that ſhe had been in. The Mortimarts, whom Lewis had made peers and marſhals of France, were greatly inferior to a hero of the laſt age: He admitted, with eager delight, thoſe ideas which gave dignity to the object of his ſecret paſſion, already ſo reſpectable in his eyes, and exclaimed ſo much the more againſt the injuſtice of fortune to madame de Maintenon, as ſhe had ſeemed wholly reſigned to it.

What ſervice might not the abbé de Vertot have rendered to both, if he had publiſhed theſe memoirs which he had in his hands! the merit of the grandfather would have wholly effaced the remembrance of the burleſque huſband.

The king was exceſſively concerned at the continual diſputes between the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, and madame de Maintenon: he had occaſion for the former to keep the latter at court, who upon the leaſt diſcontent, ſecluded herſelf from all his parties, and languor inſtantly took her place. He reconciled the two ladies, and drew up a treaty of peace, by which they mutually promiſed to love each other; they ſigned it and hated no leſs. The word of women is not more ſacred than that of kings, hoſtilities were renewed, but with more regard to the laws of decorum.

Madame de Maintenon hoped to remove the jealouſy of the miſtreſs, by keeping herſelf retired with the duke du Maine. She employed herſelf in making a collection of his themes; ſhe had already made

made a very pretty one of his little occaſional ſallies of wit, and all who read it were ſurprized to ſee him ſo lame, yet ſo forward, ſo full of vivacity, yet ſo ſenſible and ſo prudent: this little book had apppeared under the title of *miſcellanies, by an author of ſeven years old.* It contained ſeveral billets, in which there was always ſomething delicate and eaſy, of ſelect pieces of hiſtory, and of maxims and reflexions. The following is one of the reflections. *Although I ſhould cenſure myſelf, yet I will ſay it, princes are delighted when they receive preſents, but are not ſo well pleaſed when they beſtow them.* Monſieur le Ragois had introduced in it ſome brilliant things: madame de Maintenon ſuppreſt them, and nothing remained but the graces, and ſimplicity of childhood.

The epiſtle dedicatory made a great noiſe; it was conceived in the moſt delicate manner imaginable: the king and his miſtreſs were there praiſed to exceſs, but without ſervility or meanneſs. Bayle admired three dedications: in my opinion, after reading this, only one is worthy of admiration. It was attributed to madame de Maintenon, her name was not put to it: but what other perſon than the governeſs to the prince had a right to preſent this book to madame de Monteſpan, and to addreſs her with that familiar air, that tenderneſs for the young prince, and friendſhip for her? This dedication was thought by ſome perſons, to be too elegant, too correct for the work of a woman, but the education of the duke du Maine had given as high an opinion of her underſtanding as it had coſt her application and fatigue. However ready people are in our days to ſuſpect female authors, of lending their names to the performances of men who have never publiſhed any thing equal to what is attributed to theſe ladies, yet no one will now endeavour to deprive madame de Maintenon of the ſole fame of this ingenious trifle, ſince this collection of her letters has given an idea of the ſtrength of her underſtanding.

CHAP.

CHAPTER LXII.

Of CHARLES D'AUBIGNE'.

MADAME de Maintenon gave her family the firſt fruits of her favour at court: ſhe loved her brother with extreme tenderneſs; ſhe urged him to raiſe the depreſt name of d'Aubigné by ſome noble exploit. Her's was not a blind and partial affection, it was a maſculine friendſhip, which would have cured him of his faults, if conſtitution had not been more powerful than the advice of the ſiſter, and perhaps, than the will of the patient.

Charles d'Aubigné made his firſt campaigns in cardinal Mazarine's regiment, where he was an enſign; and in the king's, where he was a lieutenant. Louvois, being inceſſantly importuned by madame de Maintenon, gave him two companies; one of infantry, and another of horſe, and named him to the government of Amersfort, a little town in Holland, which the king had lately reduced under his ſubjection.

Lewis in all the towns he took, eſtabliſhed the exerciſe of his religion with rigour, which could not but enrage a people whom the haughty Spaniards had made free: it has been ſaid that he conquered for the church, as much as for France. The officers who commanded in theſe places, imitated his zeal, and thoſe who were deſcended from hereticks imitated him beſt. D'Aubigné diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Amersfort by his ardour to convert the calviniſts, and by his ſeverity in oppreſſing them; he treated them with that inhumanity, which makes Rome and France be deteſted. The citizens complained of their cruel governor to the marquis Ruvigni deputed general of the reformed churches. Madame de Maintenon being informed of her brother's rigorous conduct, ſhe wrote him a letter which may be found in this collection, and which, to the ſhame of this age is ſtill neceſſary to repeat. 'Be favourable to the catholicks, ſays ſhe, and be not 'cruel to the huguenots. They are in an error, but in 'ſuch

'ſuch a one as we ourſelves have been, in which 'Henry the fourth long was, and many great princes 'ſtill are. Jeſus Chriſt made proſelytes by gen-'tleneſs and perſuaſion. It belongs to prieſts to 'convert men; God has not given to ſoldiers the 'care of ſouls.' Maxims like theſe we admire in the preface to de Thou's hiſtory: madame de Maintenon in a flight of generoſity hit upon a truth, which de Thou found by deep reflection. Wiſe and good men were then ignorant of the power which princes have ſince claimed over the conſciences of their ſubjects. They could not imagine that the church had a right to bring back her children to her boſom, by all methods indifferently, and to force by the rage of Dioclefian thoſe who reſiſted the perſuaſions of St. Peter. Toleration was not then the remains of proteſtaniſm.

Amersfort was almoſt as ſoon abandoned as taken, and d'Aubigné was made governor of Bedfort in Alſatia: there he procured the love of the people at the expence of his fortune, which he wholly ruined; his ſiſter however paid all his debts.

Ambition and diſcontent followed d'Aubigné every where: he aſpired to employments which he was not capable of filling, and inſtead of enjoying that mediocrity, which the beginning of his life ſcarce flattered him with the hope of, and which he had not acquired by his own merit, he tormented his ſiſter with importunities to exert all her intereſt in his favour. Madame de Maintenon uſed her utmoſt endeavours to fit him for an exalted ſtation: but all her advice, all her cares were ineffectual. She was never able to cure him of thoſe city-like airs of magnificence, thoſe ſallies of falſe courage, that affectation of importance in his looks and words, his ſtrange and unaccountable whims, his taſte for low company, and a thouſand ridiculous follies that reflected back upon her. Finding it impoſſible to raiſe him, ſhe endeavoured to enrich him, but ſucceeded no better in this deſign than the former: d'Aubigné would ſpend in a few hours thoſe ſums which his ſiſter had been ſeveral months ſoliciting for him.

His

His deſires were as extravagant and irregular as his expences. He loved women, and his choice of miſtreſſes could not excuſe this paſſion: None but thoſe unhappy wretches, whom publick proſtitution had conſigned to infamy and diſguſt, were the objects of his adoration. One of thoſe miſtreſſes brought him a ſon which was educated in the caſtle of Maintenon, and died in poverty*: ſo deſtitute was d'Aubigne of affections as well as virtue.

Madame de Maintenon, ſeeing that age did not correct her brother's failings, hoped that marriage might produce ſome alteration in him. Her friends were ſolicitous to find him a wife; even Louvois offered him one out of his own family. He had no eſtate, therefore the goverment of Coignac, in Saintonge was given him, which was worth ten thouſand livres a year. He ballanced a long time, between the ſeveral matches that were propoſed to him; and his ſiſter was ſo very indifferent with regard to his choice, that ſhe could not be accuſed of either aſpiring to make him a half-lord, or of ſeeking for herſelf the ſupport of a grand alliance. D'Aubigné after having offered himſelf to two rich old widows, one of whom thought he ſet too high a price upon his perſon, and the other expreſſed a diſlike of him, after having adored a mademoiſelle Cavelier, or a hundred thouſand crowns, which were her portion, and diſdainfully refuſed a madame du Bourg, who would have carried him back to America, appeared at length to be wholly attached to mademoiſelle de Floigni: fifteen years, an agreeable perſon, great tenderneſs, and a fortune of a hundred thouſand francs could not fix him: when the marriage was upon the point of being concluded, he broke it off publickly.

Mademoiſelle Pietre the daughter of an attorney was propoſed to him: he married her without conſulting his ſiſter; who finding the evil without remedy, approved this match as if it had been made by herſelf.

The

* He was named Charles: he died in 1717.

The defect of low birth was not what afflicted her: mademoiſelle Pietre had neither wit, beauty, nor fortune that could excuſe this unequal alliance; and never had the pride of madame de Maintenon more to ſuffer, than on the day that ſhe was obliged to introduce madame d'Aubigné to the dutcheſs de Richelieu, and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. All who belonged to her ſeemed to oppoſe her elevation, and at court, where envy takes the advantage of every thing to overthrow a riſing favourite, a baniſhed grandfather, and an infamous father, a burleſque huſband might have been forgot, if not recalled to remembrance by a ridiculous brother, a contemptible ſiſter-in-law, and relations who were not fit to be owned.

While madame de Maintenon ſought only the certainty of an agreeable life, ſhe had cultivated the affection of all her family; but when fortune ſeemed willing to raiſe her to an exalted ſtation, ſhe by degrees broke off all intimacy with them, and ceaſed to ſee them, without ceaſing to do them ſervice. She dreaded leſt ſhe ſhould be oppreſſed with all the nobility of Poitou; already they began to boaſt of being allied to her by marriages, tho' they really were not; theſe allies pretended to be of her family, and her family aſked for every thing that became vacant. Madame de Maintenon ſet bounds to their graſping views, which they ought to have preſcribed to themſelves, rendered their circumſtances more eaſy, without making them more ſplendid, placed the merit of their ſervices in a juſt light, without importuning thoſe who were able to reward them, and deſpiſed their murmurs.

That ſhe might keep all at a diſtance, ſhe began with thoſe who were deareſt to her, and ſent her brother and his wife back to Coignac. They returned to Paris from time to time, but the ſlights they met with at court, drove them back again: however, madame de Maintenon entered into all their affairs with more tenderneſs than from her behaviour to them they had reaſon to expect: ſhe gave them advice, ſhe undertook their buſineſs, ſhe ſet new ſchemes for profit on foot,

foot, and her brother had all the advantage of them. There was in this method of enriching herſelf ſomething mean and ignoble, which added to her extreme reluctance to play the part of a ſolicitreſs. Although the miniſters and even the king were acquainted with all this, yet ſhe was accuſed of ſelling her intereſt, of ſetting a price upon all offices and employments, and of afterwards accounting to madame de Monteſpan for the ſale; of placing her money with that of the marchioneſs in foreign banks to ſecure it, in caſe they were diſgraced, againſt the conſequences of an enquiry into the methods by which it was raiſed, of having an office of intelligence in Paris wherein were ſettled the different prices of a recommendation to monſieur Colbert, of a petition preſented to the king, of an affair already finiſhed, of one begun. If the prince or the miniſter either by chance, through prejudice, or a powerful ſolicitation, conferred a poſt on one whoſe merit gave him no title to it, this was charged to the venality of madame de Maintenon. It was her who for twenty thouſand crowns had made Daquin firſt phyſician to the king, and for a hundred thouſand francs had made Brunet farmer general of the revenues. She it was that engroſſed every thing. Thoſe who were diſappointed in their expectations, became diaffected to the government, and attributed the refuſals they had from the court to the ſecret ſprings put into motion by their richer rivals. There is nothing, ſaid they, to be had, from the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, but through madame de Maintenon, and from madame de Maintenon all muſt be purchaſed with money. In this manner did the publick treat the moſt diſintereſted and moſt benevolent woman of her age: and thus ſhall we always treat the favourites of our kings.

Madame de Maintenon was informed of theſe injurious reports; ſhe was apprehenſive that they would at laſt reach the king, ſhe trembled leſt ſuſpicion ſhould be taken for proof, and refuſed to be concerned in any affairs that were propoſed to her. It is natural

tural for a perſon who has once been in diſtreſs, to fear being reduced to it again: madame de Maintenon had ſo ſtrong a propenſity to œconomy, and the deſire of amaſſing money is ſo intimately connected with this propenſity, ſo many examples ſeemed to authoriſe venality, that the diſintereſtedneſs for which ſhe was remarkable and appeared at firſt to be the conſequence of prudence only, was in reality the effect of an unbiaſſed candor. The ladies began to live in a ſcandalous familiarity with men of buſineſs; thoſe from whoſe ſnares the comptroller general, the intendants of the Finances, and the farmers general eſcaped, cringed to their ſecretaries and clerk; they gave them advice, they propoſed new taxes, they ſold their intereſt, they ſold their virtue, they ſold the blood of the people, and the moſt induſtrious part of the nation was oppreſt by the faireſt.

The king being ſurpriſed that madame de Maintenon never aſked for any thing, often aſſigned her brother's gratuities upon grants already made. D'Aubigné always came to Paris to diſſipate theſe ſums. In vain madame de Maintenon ſtruggled with her tenderneſs to give him ſuch a reception as ſhould force him to return to Coignac; ſhe could not prevail either by perſuaſions or coldneſs. D'Aubigné loſt at the gaming table all the money which the king had given him, and all that he ſtill hoped to obtain. D'Aubigné being one day at the gaming table, and ſetting great heaps of untold gold upon the cards, the marſhal de Vivonne entering, ſaid: 'there is no one but 'd'Aubigné who can play ſo high.' 'Becauſe, repli'ed d'Aubigné with great rudeneſs, I have recei'ved my marſhal's ſtaff in money.'

Madame de Maintenon was as ſolicitous to conceal the great favour ſhe was in with the king, as d'Aubigné was to publiſh it every where, as if it was merit enough to be her brother. He uſed often to ſay very extravagant and very imprudent things of the high favour ſhe was in, which were repeated with ſome alleviations to her: to repair this raſhneſs, ſhe was obliged to impoſe upon

upon her beſt friends: ſo that Paris ſent news to Verſailles which puzzled the moſt inquiſitive and moſt penetrating courtiers.

Madame de Maintenon was grieved that ſhe had not in her whole family a man whom ſhe could produce with honour to herſelf. Lewis, who upon her recommendation had entertained an eſteem for d'Aubigné, hated him as ſoon as he knew him, and this hatred grew ſo violent, that nothing more fully proved the aſcendant madame de Maintenon had over him, than his conferring upon d'Aubigné afterwards the order of the Holy Ghoſt and the government of Berry. La Bruyere in his characters has painted him exactly.

'His cloaths, ſays he, glitter all over with gold, 'the handle of his ſword is an onyx, on his finger he 'wears a diamond ring, with which he dazzles the 'eyes; he never wants any of thoſe curious trifles 'which are worn as well through vanity as for uſe: 'he is no longer without all that gawdy apparel for 'which a young man has bartered his liberty: we will 'at leaſt look upon his fine things, however let me 'have the cloaths and the jewels, and let who will 'have the perſon * He deſcends from his coach with 'great noiſe and buſtle, he puſhes away the crowd, 'he makes himſelf a free paſſage, he ſcratches at the 'door, he almoſt knocks, he tells his name, the crowd 'now begin to breathe again: he enters with them, he 'raiſed envy before, and now he excites compaſſion.'* In a word, madame de Maintenon was the idol of the court, and the count d'Aubigné was the jeſt of it.

CHAPTER LXIII.

Madame de Maintenon's converſation with the king.

THE king ever ſince the birth of the count of Toulouſe, had treated madame de Monteſpan

* Chap. 2. of perſonal merit.

with great coldneſs and indifference; madame de Monteſpan in her vexation ſwore never to lye in more, and took meaſures to lye in again. Louvois and Marſillac who had always foreſeen whom they were to obey, contributed to bring madame de Maintenon into favour, while that favour gave them no umbrage; but when they perceived the rapid progreſs it made, they uſed their utmoſt endeavours to overthrow it. Madame de Maintenon ſcorned any dependance upon them; and madame de Monteſpan was now in a ſituation to excite their pity, and to acknowledge their ſervices: but they conſidered that if their efforts in her favour ſhould be ſucceſsful, her gratitude would be of little uſe to them, becauſe the king having apparently loſt all tenderneſs for his miſtreſs, he would for the future have more reſpect for her, than compliance with her will. But nothing is ſo pleaſing to men in power and in favour, as Louvois and Marſillac were, than to ſee the place where miſchief may be done, filled by a woman who can neither do good nor harm.

Madame de Maintenon was attentive to all the ſecret practices of two plotters, who made her ruin the firſt ſtep towards the accompliſhment of their ſchemes; but either through generoſity, or a diſtruſt of her own power, ſhe confined herſelf to warding off the blow they aimed at her, and would not openly break with her enemies, or reduce herſelf to the neceſſity of ruining them in her turn. However they ſeemed to have no apprehenſions of a rupture, but ſapp'd without caution the foundation of a favour, the ſingularity of which ſhewed them conſequences to be feared, and was in their opinion a violation of all the laws of cuſtom, and decency: for if ambition deſpiſes prejudice when its own gratification is in view, it is inceſſantly enforcing it upon the minds of others.

Marſillac was continually endeavouring to leſſen madame de Maintenon in the eyes of the king, whom he ſo often diverted with tales of the burleſque cripie, that it was plain he was not afraid of offending her. Madame de Maintenon uſed to bluſh when the converſation

ſation took this turn, but inſtantly endeavoured to atone for this weakneſs by laughing like the reſt of the company: the king's good nature and ſenſibility made him ſuffer greatly from the deſigned blunders of Marſillac, the malignant pleaſure of madame de Monteſpan, but eſpecially for the embarraſſment of madame de Maintenon. Scaron was ſo often brought upon the ſcene that the king at length perceived the intention of Marſillac in entertaining him with ſo many ſtories of the burleſque poet, and by the gravity with which he heard them, ſhewed him that he did not make his court well: his reſpect for the widow made him no longer think the huſband ſo humourous. Madame de Maintenon, either to harden him againſt thoſe ideas which Scaron awaked in a delicate mind, becauſe he was not philoſopher enough to deſpiſe them, or to ſpare herſelf the torture of conſtraint, would ſometimes when ſhe was alone with the king, turn the diſcourſe upon *the queen's patient*, ſpoke leſs of his jeſts than his infirmities, and gave the king to underſtand that ſhe had been his ſervant rather than his wife. Lewis received without difficulty theſe impreſſions which favoured the nicety of his love.

Louvois attacked madame de Maintenon in a place leſs ſenſible indeed, but weaker. He accuſed her to the king of entering into all the cabals of the court, either through curioſity, or ambition, and even ventured to ſay to him, 'It is madame de Maintenon 'who is the cauſe of all, or at leaſt who boaſts her-'ſelf to be the cauſe.' If theſe words had been believed they would have ruined madame de Maintenon, but the king who had diſtruſt enough in his temper to hate a woman that buſied herſelf in ſtate affairs, had too much of it not to ſuſpect a miniſter. When he examined madame de Maintenon, he ſaw, or thought he ſaw, an extreme moderation in her, and in Louvois an extreme jealouſy; ſo that from his love of juſtice joined to the mortification he felt at having been almoſt impoſed upon, he became inacceſſible to every thing that tended to leſſen his eſteem for her. He had

ſupported her againſt Marſillac, through compaſſion, againſt Louvois through juſtice, againſt madame de Monteſpan through inclination; he ſupported her againſt all the reſt through honour, and from that time madame de Maintenon had with Lewis no other advocate but himſelf.

She now hoped more than ever that ſhe ſhould be able to convert him. The devout ſee the finger of God, where the wiſe will ſee only that of man; ſhe attributed to a miracle of grace, an indifference common enough after long poſſeſſion. Theſe pious ideas excited her to purſue her ſcheme, and to look upon all opportunities of advancing it, as contrived by providence itſelf.

The king having made a review of his houſhold, ſeemed to be very well pleaſed with it, praiſed the Mouſquetaires, particularly, but obſerved that madame de Maintenon was very penſive during the whole time. In the evening he aſked her the reaſon of it, for every action, or look of hers, began to be intereſting to him. Madame de Maintenon told him that a thought had ſuggeſted itſelf to her, and tormented her during the whole review. The king preſſed her to tell him what it was. 'I fancied, ſaid madame de 'Maintenon, ſmiling, that thoſe Mouſquetaires, which 'I then ſaw, were all authoriſed libertines, and that 'their captain was not much better.'

The king going aſide from the company exceſſively diverted with this notion, madame de Maintenon followed him, and when ſhe ſaw herſelf out of hearing, ſhe ſaid to him, 'You may laugh, Sire, as much as you 'pleaſe: but you love your mouſquetaires: If any 'one of them had robbed his neighbour of his wife, 'and you were made acquainted with his crime, I 'am convinced, that although he was the braveſt 'man in the troop, although the woman he had ra-'viſhed were the moſt infirm of her ſex, yet you 'would not ſuffer the guilty Mouſquetaire to lye this 'night in the palace.'

Lewis

Lewis had given way to his ſcruples, ever ſince he found his paſſion decaying: theſe words entirely ſtifled his love, and awakened his remorſe, which increaſed to ſuch a degree as to diſturb his imagination with the image of Uriah, demanding his Bathſheba from him, and reproaching him with having ſtolen her innocent, and returned her defiled.

CHAPTER LXIV.

The imprudence and fall of Madame de Monteſpan.

1697.] MADAME de Monteſpan neglected nothing to re-eſtabliſh herſelf in her place, and Lewis uſed every endeavour to diſingage himſelf from her. She was apprehenſive that the birth of the count de Toulouſe had been the cauſe of ſome ailment which had diſguſted the king. She was imprudent enough to ſeek for an explanation, and the king cruel enough to confirm her ſuſpicions. This converſation happened one day when the king had returned from hunting, and was all over in a ſweat. Madame de Monteſpan ſtill more wounded by the calmneſs with which he had inſulted her, than at the inſult itſelf, replied in a rage, that it was but reaſonable he ſhould ſuffer her defects, ſince ſhe had ſo long borne with his, and reproached him with one which ambitious love ſometimes tolerates, and which ſenſual love never can excuſe. This ſtroke went to the king's heart, he never could forgive it, madame de Monteſpan on her knees, embraced thoſe feet whoſe bad ſmell ſhe had exclaimed againſt; the king raiſed her without expreſſing either hatred, love, or compaſſion, and now the compariſon of the Mouſquetaire was underſtood in all its energy.

CHAPTER LXV.

Madame de Maintenon *is made dame* d'Autour *to the dauphineſs.*

1680.] THE dauphin's marriage put all the court into motion: The houſhold of the dauphineſs was to be formed, and the firſt employments in it, were not more eagerly ſolicited than the others. It was publickly reported, that madame de Maintenon would have a place of conſequence. Her wit alone, ſays madame de Sevigné, in one of her letters, is ſufficient to raiſe her to any ſtation.

The dutcheſs de Richelieu, from being lady of honour to the queen, was appointed lady of honour to the dauphineſs. The king thought her qualified to regulate the family of the princeſs, and to baniſh from thence all intrigue; ſince having grown old in it herſelf, ſhe knew better than any other, the arts, the dangers, and the folly of it. But either with an intention to form the dauphineſs, or to be a check upon the lady of honour, he thought it neceſſary to fill the ſecond poſt, with a woman of untainted virtue, and incorruptible fidelity. Madame de Maintenon had not yet acquired conſideration enough, for the poſt of dame d'Autour, however it could not be better filled up, than by her. The king durſt not venture to give her this place; yet could not prevail with himſelf to exclude her from it: he was extremely delicate in matters of decorum, and exacted ſo great an obſervance of it from his court, that he thought himſelf obliged to obſerve it himſelf.

Madame de Maintenon had no longer any pretence to continue there. The duke du Maine was now entirely confided to the care of the marquis de Montchevreuil, his governor. It was neceſſary that the king ſhould reward her ſervices, by an agreeable eſtabliſhment, and to her taſte for a monaſtick life, oppoſe a duty which would attach her to the world. To reconcile the dictates of his love with the regard he owed

to

to publick decency; he created the poſt of ſecond dame d'Autour, and offered it to madame de Maintenon, with that graceful obligingneſs, which enhances the value of a benefit, and gives modeſty no pretence for a refuſal. The poſt of firſt dame d'Autour, was given to the lady of the marſhal de Rochefort. Madame de Maintenon, in great confuſion at the thought of becoming the equal of a lady, whoſe rank was ſo ſuperior to hers, intreated the king to conſult madame de Rochefort, before he took any reſolution, that ſhe might be aſſured, that lady would feel no reluctance to ſerve with her. The king did as ſhe deſired, and madame de Rochefort anſwered like a perſon full of gratitude, to him who had given her her place, and of eſteem for her, whom he was deſirous of aſſociating with her.

It was alledged, that every thing which concerned the houſhold of the dauphineſs, had been ſettled between the king and madame de Maintenon, and that ſhe had named madame de Rochefort for the poſt of firſt dame d'Autour, of whoſe conſent to her having the ſecond, ſhe was aſſured of before. However that may be, the court did not ſeem ſurpriſed at this elevation. The duke de la Feuillade, making way through the croud of thoſe who were congratulating her upon her preferment, ſaid to her: 'Madam, permit me to make you my compliments upon 'this new honour, for I do not pretend to have had 'any part in it.'

Madame de Maintenon ſolicited * the king to give madame de Montchevreuil, the poſt of governeſs to the maids of honour; an eſtabliſhment the king was deſirous of preſerving, to enliven the court; which devotion, and the auſtere countenances of the ladies of the palace, began to make melancholy enough. This poſt was below the birth of the marchioneſs de Montchevreuil; but the king made her amends, by annexing particular honours to it, ſuch as free entrance at all times into the apartment of the dauphineſs,

* Sevigné's letters, December 13, 1679.

a place in her coach, the firſt rank in the houſe, and the right of attending at the toilette, in the abſence of the dames d'Autour; with all thoſe trifles, which at court are of ſuch infinite importance.

The maids of honour were not handſome; in the choice of them, beauty had been carefully avoided: they were, mademoiſelles de Laval, de Biron, de Tonnerre, de Rambures. Two amiable foreigners were afterwards added to the number, miſs Hamilton and miſs Levingſton: The birth and beauty of theſe young ladies were not their greateſt merits.

All the houſhold of the dauphineſs went to Seleſtadt to receive her: but only the ſecond dame d'Autour, and the firſt almoner, went from thence to meet her. The princeſs of Bavaria conceived a prodigious idea of the wit of the French court, from the converſation of madame de Maintenon, and monſieur Boſſuet; but on her arrival, ſhe ſoon found cauſe to alter her opinion. She had a fine underſtanding; ſhe loved the arts, and underſtood them; but never patronized them. 'You have never told me, ma-'dam, ſaid the king to her one day, that the dut-'cheſs of Tuſcany, your ſiſter, is extremely beautiful.' 'How ſhould I remember, replied the dauphineſs, 'that my ſiſter has all the beauty of the family, 'when I have all the good fortune of it?' She had that deſire of pleaſing, which, in a private perſon, would appear coquettry, but which, in a princeſs, ſupplies the want of beauty: Sanguin, after he had ſeen her, ſaid to the king, 'Sire, be not 'diſguſted with her, at the firſt glance, and you 'will afterwards be pleaſed with her;' and Sanguin was right.

Madame de Maintenon was now freed from her ſlavery; from the moment that ſhe was placed about the dauphineſs, ſhe quitted madame de Monteſpan, who could no longer ſay, as ſhe had often done; 'if 'ſhe is reſolved to leave the court, who hinders her?' Madame de Maintenon was lodged in the apartment of mademoiſelle de Tours, one of the kings daughters, by the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. The king gave her

that

that which had belonged to madame d'Elbeuf, and ſome days afterwards a chamber above his own, that he might, with the more freedom, enjoy a converſation, which relieved him from the flatteries of his courtiers, and the empty gravity of his miniſters*.

Madame de Maintenon was at firſt apprehenſive that her poſt about the dauphineſs, would ſubject her to the ſplendor, the pleaſures, and the luxury of a court, for all which ſhe had an invincible diſlike: but the dauphineſs loved nothing but ſolitude; after the firſt diverſions and entertainments, her apartments had rather the air of a monaſtry than a court; which gave madame de Maintenon an opportunity of reſigning herſelf up to that retirement which ſhe had promiſed to God, and the abbé Gobelin, without dreading the cenſure of an affected ſingularity.

She had alſo feared, that her elevation would appear ridiculous, and that her former low condition, would be but too often remembered; but that diſadvantage was repaired by ſuch a graceful humility, and ſo well effaced, by the juſtly merited eſteem of the king, that no one diſapproved of his choice, but the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, who was enraged that the widow of Scaron had dared to become her equal. Madame de Maintenon appeared publickly at court, with as much eaſe and dignity, as if ſhe had been uſed to it from her earlieſt years, and acquitted herſelf of all the little duties of her office, with a grace that ſhewed, ſhe was born only for the higheſt grandeur.

With that happy talent of captivating the affections, which ſhe poſſeſſed in ſo great a degree, it was not difficult for her to gain the favour of her miſtreſs, haughty and capricious as ſhe was. Madame de Rochefort laboured under an ill ſtate of health; the dutcheſs de Richelieu gave way to languor, and was at length ſated with the court, and left madame de Maintenon at liberty to conciliate the affection of the princeſs: always attentive to every thing that could pleaſe, ſhe never neglected the moſt inſignificant trifles,

* Memoirs of the princeſs de Montpenſier.

ſles, or diſdained to perform the loweſt offices. The dauphineſs had remarkable thick hair, which none of her women could comb to pleaſe her. Madame de Maintenon alone was able to diſintangle it, without giving her any pain. She reigned unrivaled at the toilet, where the king was often ſeen; yet his affection for the dauphineſs, was not ſo ſtrong a motive for theſe frequent viſits, as his inclination for the dame d'Autour. 'It is ſcarce credible, ſaid ſhe often afterwards, 'how greatly the talent of combing hair dexterouſly, 'contributed to my elevation *.

Madame de Maintenon loſt a diſcretion to the dauphin. She ſent him a cane, the head of which was a pomegranate of gold and rubies: the crown on the top, when opened, ſhewed the picture of the princeſs his wife; and beneath it were wrote theſe words: *il piu grato naſconde.* This emblem was formerly made for the counteſs de Grignan: it was then thought an hyberbole, but for the dauphineſs, it was a truth.

Madame de Maintenon ſaw the king every day, without being perſecuted by madame de Monteſpan: the enmity between theſe two ladies, was now carried to the greateſt exceſs; madame de Monteſpan, enraged to ſee her accoſted by every one, with a reſpectful awe, to ſee her in poſſeſſion of ſo much power, that ſhe received from the miniſters, that court, which all others paid to them; inſinuated to the dauphineſs, that the king's extreme aſſiduity in viſiting her, had no other motive, but the deſire of ſeeing madame de Maintenon: the dauphineſs happening to complain, that the viſits ſhe made the king, however ſhort they might be, were always interrupted by a private converſation between him and madame de Maintenon, which ſeemed to be ſufficiently intereſting: the marchioneſs de Monteſpan took this opportunity to awaken her jealouſy and pride; and dwelt much upon that negligence, with which the king, when he came to ſee her, would throw himſelf into an eaſy chair, and upon the affected reſerve of madame de Maintenon, who

* Sevigné's letter, May 31, 1680.

who always placed herſelf at the other end of the room. ‘ You are ſurpriſed, madam, continued the marchioneſs, at the favour your dame d'Autour is in, what ‘ would you be, if you knew the former part of her ‘ hiſtory * ?’ And then the lame huſband was introduced, the importunate petitions of the widow, the lovers without number, ſervices repaid with inſolence, ambition, under the maſk of humility, treachery inſtead of gratitude; and all that malice and envy could ſuggeſt to a woman, who was in deſpair, for having ſo uſeleſsly made all France a witneſs of her guilty love, and grief.

Theſe unfavourable impreſſions were never effaced from the mind of the dauphineſs, who always treated madame de Maintenon with reſpect, but never loved her. The king was ſo enraged with his miſtreſs, for her malice, that he excluded her from the *media-noche* †, and madame de Maintenon would no longer viſit her. Madame de Monteſpan, in vain ſeemed aſtoniſhed, that a ſimple recital of facts ſhould be imputed to her as a crime, ſhe would have been diſmiſſed from court, if monſieur Colbert had not ſpeedily effected a reconciliation ‡, but wholly incapable of ſuppreſſing her reſentment, ſhe declared publickly, that the king would be ſoon tired of a woman who attempted to alter the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition; yet being ſenſible that nothing tended ſo much to weaken reſpect, as appearing to be at variance with perſons, who were actually in favour, whenever ſhe met madame de Maintenon, ſhe ſpoke to her with ſo much tenderneſs, ſuch an appearance of familiarity, that their quarrels were ſtill confined to the inner parts of the palace.

---

* Sevigné's letters July 7, 1680. There is a letter from madame de Coulanges to madame de Sevigné, which that lady ſent to her daughter the counteſs of Grignan, in which all theſe things are explained.

† A term which the French have borrowed of the Spaniards, to ſignify a repaſt of meat which is eat at midnight, when a fleſh-day begins after a faſt.

‡ Sevigné letters, July 7, 1680.

palace. It happened one day, that they were obliged to go in the ſame coach together, to take the air: 'let 'us get in, ſaid the marchioneſs to her, but we will 'not be the dupes of this diſſimulation: let us con-'verſe together like friends; when we return, we 'will reſume our hatred and our quarrels.'

This court-truce was violated as ſoon as propoſed; 'I dreamed, ſaid the marchioneſs to madame de Main-'tenon, that *the grey cat* * was diſmiſſed, and that the 'king and I were reconciled, even in your apartment.' 'And I alſo have had dreams, replied madame de 'Maintenon; you and I, methought, were upon the 'great ſtair-caſe of Verſailles: I went up, you de-'ſcended: I raiſed myſelf to the clouds, and you went 'to Fontevrault.'

Theſe frequent ſarcaſms at length fixed them in an averſion to each other, which made all attempts to reconcile them impoſſible. Madame de Maintenon was not ſo apprehenſive of the malicious efforts of the marchioneſs, as of the ſecret machinations of the abbeſs of Fontevrault, who, aſhamed of the guilt, yet charmed with the dignity of her ſiſter, had declared, that it was better to undermine the dame d'Autour, by making her ridiculous, than to attack her openly, by loading her with aſperſions. Madame de Maintenon was warned of her enemies deſigns; ſhe defended herſelf only by her prudence and circumſpection, but wholly indifferent with regard to her place at court, ſhe often ſaid, 'if they fail in their attempts we will 'laugh at them; if they ſucceed we will ſuffer with 'fortitude.'

CHAPTER LXVI.

The Chambre-ardente, or Burning-court.

THE dauphineſs became pregnant, but the public joy was interrupted by an event which proved that our manners were not yet wholly free from barbarity.

From the time that the marchioneſs de Brinvillieres was condemned to the ſtake, for having made trial of her

* Mademoiſelle de Fontanges.

her poiſons upon ſome of her neareſt relations; poiſoning was the ſubject of all converſation: terror and anxiety filled the minds of the people: the courtiers lived in perpetual fears and diſtruſt. They never eat without trembling; all ſudden deaths were attributed to poiſoning. Crimes the moſt difficult to be perpetrated, were the moſt eaſily believed, and a nation that was the leaſt capable of violent reſentments, dreaded the effects of the moſt perfidious and moſt cruel revenge: our minds, too weak for that daring raſhneſs, which is neceſſary for the perpetration of great crimes, were unjuſt enough to admit the ſuſpicion of them.

La Vigoureux, and la Voiſin, women who had traded in the ſpoils of indigent beauty, when they no longer found cuſtomers, quitted that dangerous trade, for another ſtill more dangerous, but more lucrative. They ſold quinteſſences of proved poiſons, to wives and daughters, weary of the long lives of their huſbands and fathers. The people conſulted them as ſorcerers: the nobility had recourſe to them as poiſoners. At firſt they exerciſed their art with great privacy; afterwards, either impelled by the greedineſs of gain, or becauſe they found themſelves ſupported by a great number of illuſtrious accomplices, they delivered their oracles publickly, and diſtributed their receipts without any precaution. At the firſt report of this wickedneſs, Paris was alarmed, but was afterwards amazed at its continuance with impunity.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan, like all miſtreſſes of kings, dreaded poiſon; and Louvois had reſolved to ruin, if poſſible, all who were great and noble in France. They both made ſuch earneſt remonſtrances to the king, that a court of juſtice, called the Burning-court, was erected in the arſenal, for the examination of poiſoners.

The marquiſs de Louvois, who believed in the power of magic, ſince he conſulted a cordelier *, who was well ſkilled in divination, concerning all events of war,

* Memoir manuſcripts of the biſhop of Agen, and letters from madame de Maintenon to cardinal de Noailles

war, gave private orders to the commiſſioners, to bring information againſt the ſorceries practiſed by his enemies; he knew the extreme delicacy of Lewis, with regard to religion, and he was reſolved to make uſe of the pretence of piety, to rid himſelf of perſons, whom he could not ruin by other means: 'but ſaid one of 'the judges to monſieur de la Reynie, we ſit here up-'on ſorceries and compacts with the devil, which 'crimes are no longer proſecuted before the parlia-'ment; we are only to take cognizance of poiſoners; 'why then do we examine other criminals?'

La Reynie was aſtoniſhed that he ſhould find a man of integrity among the commiſſioners, and replied; 'I 'have my orders.' 'Monſieur, anſwered the judge, 'juſtice admits not of letters de cachet; let their con-'tents be made a law of, and we will obey it as well 'as you. We muſt now act according to known and 'eſtabliſhed laws.'

Some of the chief nobility were involved in this affair. La Vigoureux and la Voiſin affirmed, that their dupes were their accomplices. The counteſs of Soiſſons was accuſed, of having aſked what charms and incantations ſhe ſhould make uſe of, to bring back a lover who had quitted her: who was a great prince; and, ever ſince his inconſtancy to her, had loved none but low and contemptible women: to which the ſorcereſs had replied; that ſhe ſhould never regain his heart: and the counteſs exclaimed, 'then he ſhall re-'pent of it,' At court, theſe incautious words were conſtrued into a crime; in the city they ſaid, ſuch queſtions and threats were but trifles for a Mancini.

The counteſs of Soiſſons, ſtung perhaps with remorſe, or perhaps, ill adviſed by fear, ſet out precipitately for Bruſſels; and the next day ſhe was ſummoned to appear perſonally before the commiſſioners of the Burning-court, the king ſaid to madame de Carignan, 'I have ſuffered the counteſs of Soiſſons to eſcape, 'but perhaps I ſhall one day anſwer for it to God, and 'my people.'

The duke de Luxembourg being informed that the commiſſioners had a paper in their hands ſign-

ed

ſigned by him, in which he permitted the ſorcerers to make inchantments in his name, and to invoke the devil *his good friend*, ran to the houſe of father de la Chaiſe, had a long conference with him, and from thence went and ſurrendered himſelf to the governor of the Baſtile, where he was cloſely confined. He deſired to have a confeſſor, but was denied. He was, at his earneſt requeſt, permitted to have a book, but inſtead of Cæſar's commentaries, they gave him the lives of the ſaints. He was blamed by the publick for not having quitted the kingdom, after firſt making a formal declaration that he would return, when ſummoned, to appear before his natural judges.

The dutcheſs de Bouillon, and madame de Tingri were ſummoned before this court, and made their appearance with a great train of relations. They were accuſed of believing in the devil, and of not believing in God. The witneſſes depoſed that the dutcheſs went to la Voiſin, leaning upon the duke de Vendôme her lover, and holding the duke de Bouillon by the hand; that ſhe aſked la Voiſin for a little poiſon to deſtroy an old diſagreeable huſband, and alſo for a charm to ſecure her marriage with a young man by whom ſhe was beloved. 'Is it poſſible, gentlemen, ſaid ma-'dame de Bouillon, that you can believe theſe wretch-'es?' She appeared before this aweful tribunal, with all the fortitude of a hero; and monſieur de Luxembourg with all the weak terrors of a woman. The dutcheſs was puniſhed for her intrepidity by a letter de cachet, which baniſhed her to Nerac, near the Pyreneans; and the duke for his unmanly weakneſs by eighteen months impriſonment. It was matter of ſurpriſe to all the world that he did not claim the privilege of his peerage.

The burning court rather terrified than puniſhed criminals, which were brought before it. It was at length ſuppreſſed, having been always conſidered as the tribunal where Louvois exerciſed his vengeance. De Lorge was accuſed for having made a compact with the devil; the duke de Vendôme of having conſulted magicians concerning the time when the king ſhould die:

die: Nevers of having ſhewed to the counteſs de Soiſſons, his ſiſter, her huſband expiring.

Theſe reports fell of themſelves, but ſo many perſons had been ſeized, upon the ſlighteſt ſuſpicions, that Reynie was looked upon as the inquiſitor-general of a kingdom, where, till then, neither indiſcreet ſpeeches, nor criminal curioſity had been puniſhed. However the reſult of this extraordinary commiſſion was an edict againſt poiſoning, which was of great uſe to the public.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan, who was fallen ſo low in the king's favour, that people were ready to enquire, why ſhe ſtaid at court? was deſirous of being continued there by a great poſt which ſhould give her as much dignity in the queen's houſe, as ſhe had had pleaſure in the cloſet of the king. The counteſs of Soiſſons was ſuperintendant and head of the queen's council; through ſome remains of reſpect for her, ſhe was permitted to diſpoſe of this poſt: madame de Monteſpan purchaſed it, payed the ſum ſtipulated for it extremely ill, and now believed ſhe had carried her point: but ſhe ſoon found that favourites in diſgrace, never recover their influence by holding great employments. She was even accuſed of having raiſed enemies againſt the counteſs of Soiſſons, that ſhe might adorn herſelf with her ſpoils. The queen when ſhe was informed of it, ſaid, calmly, 'it is my fate then to be 'attended by the miſtreſſes of my huſband.' So certain it is, that great trouble is inſeparable from great grandeur.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.